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Thesis title: **Jane Williams (Ysgafell) (1806-85) and nineteenth-century Welsh identity**

SUMMARY

This thesis examines the life and work of Jane Williams (Ysgafell) and her relation to nineteenth-century Welsh identity and Welsh culture. Williams's writing career spanned more than fifty years and she worked in a wide range of genres (poetry, history, biography, literary criticism, a critique of an official report on education in Wales, a memoir of childhood, and religious tracts). She lived in Wales for much of her life and drew on Welsh, and Welsh-language, sources for much of her published writing. Her body of work has hitherto received no detailed critical attention, however, and this thesis considers the ways in which her gender and the variety of genres in which she wrote (several of which were genres in which women rarely operated at that period) have contributed to the omission of her work from the field of Welsh Writing in English. The thesis argues that this critical neglect demonstrates the current limitations of this academic field.

The thesis considers Williams's body of work by analysing the ways in which she positioned herself in relation to Wales, and therefore reconstructs her biography (current accounts of much of her life are inaccurate or misleading) in order to trace not only the general trajectory of this affective relation, but also to examine the variations and nuances of this relation in each of her published works. The study argues that the liminality of Jane Williams's position, in both her life and work, corresponds closely to many of the important features of the established canon of Welsh Writing in English. Therefore, the parameters of this rapidly-developing field should be extended to permit the inclusion of her writing.

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JANE WILLIAMS (YSGAFELL)

AND

NINETEENTH-CENTURY WELSH IDENTITY

Gwyneth Tyson Roberts

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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NOTES

This thesis follows the guidelines for references and the bibliography in the *Modern Humanities Research Association Style Book* (4th ed., 1991).

Some of the material on which chapters of this thesis is based was also used in the following articles:

Chapter 2 ' ' The fair sequester'd vale': two early poems of place by Jane Williams (Ysgafell)', in *The International Journal of Welsh Writing in English* Vol. II (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014)

Chapter 5 ' ' Winding silkworms' cocoons without a reel': Betsy Cadwaladyr, Jane Williams (Ysgafell) and the writing of *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis*', in *Almanac: a yearbook of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardigan: Parthian, 2010)

Chapter 8 ' ' An account obtained from authentic documents': Jane Williams (Ysgafell) as a Historian', in *Writing a Small Nation's Past: Wales in Comparative Perspective, 1850-1950,* ed. by Neil Evans and Huw Pryce (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Jane Williams (Ysgafell): a study in liminality

The purpose of this thesis is to argue firstly that the work of Jane Williams (Ysgafell) should be restored to a significant place in the nineteenth-century literature of Wales, and secondly that its current unjustified exclusion from the field of Welsh Writing in English is a consequence of the origins and history of that field. In support of the first argument, the thesis will trace the development of Williams's writing in relation to nineteenth-century Welsh identity. In support of the second, it will argue that the rehabilitation of her work within the constantly evolving field of Welsh Writing in English will permit the further development of that field by simultaneously making its content richer and its parameters more inclusive.

Jane Williams had a professional writing career of more than fifty years; she lived in Wales for much of her life, studied Welsh language, literature and history, and used them as the sources for much of her published work. No other nineteenth-century Welsh writer in English presents an equally complex, and equally fluid, position in relation to Welsh identity. The way in which she created her very individual authorial voice and located herself in relation to her own personal history and to national, social, linguistic and cultural lines of demarcation calls to mind the voice of the blackbird which John Ormond celebrates in his poem 'Boundaries' (2004). The bird, says Ormond, uses "his obligato signature" to "define his territory, mark his boundary", and

essays yes out of his history
Against all configurations of silence
Through the one throat he happens to have.[i]

The ways in which Jane Williams employed "the one throat [s]he happen[ed] to have", and the ways she used her distinctive authorial voice to define her multiple territories and mark her shifting boundaries offer the opportunity both to examine the development of an individual authorial voice and to analyse the ways in which the fluid and unstable elements of her personal, social, cultural, linguistic and literary liminality relate to more general components of national identity. For the purposes of this discussion I wish to use the concept of liminality proposed by Rob Shields - "Classically, liminality occurs when people are in transition from one station of life to another, or from one culturally-defined space to another" - and to argue that Williams is most productively seen as a liminal figure in both these senses.[ii]

This opening chapter will consider the reasons for the current exclusion of Williams's work from the field of Welsh Writing in English and the ways in which the confusion caused by misleading and inaccurate accounts of her life and work have contributed to this exclusion. This will be followed by a brief biographical sketch of Jane Williams based on the surviving documentary evidence and a consideration of the ways in which her life and family background shaped her personal and literary identities. The chapter will then examine the processes by which Williams created and positioned these identities in relation to both Wales and England, and the psychological liminality that resulted from this positioning. It will further argue that the variety of genres in which she worked, and the fluidity and multiplicity of her authorial standpoints, are bound together by the complex of ways in which she located

herself in relation to Wales, and that the resulting liminality is a salient characteristic both of her body of work as a whole and of her authorial personality.

This chapter will thus establish a framework for the examination of her writing in the chapters which follow, which contain an analysis of each of her books in chronological order and a consideration of the role of religion in her writing, and which locate each of these topics in relation to Welsh identity. The final chapter will present an overview of the ways in which Williams's position in relation to Wales modulated during her writing career, before concluding the thesis by arguing that the analysis of her work presented in the preceding chapters provides a compelling case for the inclusion of her work in the field of Welsh Writing in English.

Welsh Writing in English: gender and genre

In 2003, Ned Thomas pointed out that for Welsh Writing in English "there is no really settled canon or even a single set of agreed criteria which might establish such a canon"; while this fluidity and flexibility has potential disadvantages (permitting disagreement which is not always constructive) it also means that since the criteria are not fixed, no candidate can be automatically excluded.[iii] Katie Gramich has suggested that "the shifting, ideological" character of nationalism and national identity in Wales can offer a particularly productive approach to the work of many Welsh writers in English.[iv] Her point illustrates Homi Bhabha's influential argument that it is the 'inbetween' spaces produced by the articulation of cultural differences that "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity."[v] The writing and analysis of Welsh writing in English has led to the construction of an interlocking multiplicity of exactly such 'inbetween'

spaces which inevitably affect any attempt to chart these shifts in the character of Welsh national identity.

In discussing the political sociology of Wales, Denis Balsom has posited a "three-Wales" model: *y fro Gymraeg* (the Welsh-speaking areas of north and west Wales), Welsh Wales (the area of the old south Wales coalfield) and British Wales (a broad belt of border country, parts of the north and north-eastern coastal districts, and much of Pembrokeshire).[vi] While each of these three areas can be seen as a cultural, social and often linguistic 'inbetween' space they are not, of course, hermetically sealed, so that further 'inbetween' spaces exist on every boundary (cultural, social and linguistic as well as geographical). In this complex and fluid context, it is not surprising that criteria for a literary canon literature which relates to two cultures and two languages but has its own distinctive character have always been problematic. As M. Wynn Thomas points out, while each of the literary and linguistic cultures of Wales is and has been inescapably aware of the other's existence, the boundaries between them have always been highly permeable, and the two cultures themselves have always been volatile admixtures in a permanent state of flux: "*All* cultures are unstable compounds" (original emphasis).[vii] Welsh Writing in English acquires an additional degree of instability by its location in the unstable spaces between the two unstable cultures.

The emergence of Welsh Writing in English as a critical field was the result of pioneering work in the late 1960s and 1970s by male teachers, lecturers and critics such as Roland Mathias, Raymond Garlick, Tony Conran, Meic Stephens, Sam Adams, Ned Thomas and Dai Smith.[viii] From their work, the dominant image of the Welsh writer in English was of a twentieth-century male author, typically with strong connections to south-east Wales.

Raymond Garlick's pioneering 1970 study, *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (as Welsh Writing in English was then known) defines Anglo-Welsh writing as "writing in the English language by Welsh*men*" and states that Anglo-Welsh literature became a possibility "when Welsh*men* began to take English as a second language" (emphasis added).[ix] Even if Garlick regarded Welsh women writers as honorary men for the purpose of these generalisations, his study gives the impression not only that very few women writers qualified but that they were all long dead; he confines his remarks on them to one (relatively short) chapter which discusses four eighteenth-century writers only (Jane Brereton, Anna Williams, Anne Penny, Julia Ann Hatton) and then returns, with an almost palpable sense of duty done, to the entirely male literary 'mainstream'.[x] Dai Smith, another pioneer, focused his critical attention from the mid-1970s onwards on "the Anglophone literature of industrial south Wales as valuable cultural expressions of the unique working-class society of the coalfield" - a society whose cultural expressions were overwhelmingly masculine (not to say macho).[xi] Daniel Williams argues that Raymond Williams's essays of the early 1980s on "Welsh industrial fiction…played a key role in establishing the parameters for the study of Welsh writing in English… and engage[d] in the process of creating a tradition of male, working-class south Walian writers."[xii]

A survey by Jane Aaron of the ratio of female to male writers in anthologies of twentieth-century writing from Wales demonstrates that other male critics and anthologists shared Garlick's assumption that only men write literature: whereas the typical gender balance among published authors is one woman to four men, Aaron finds that 'Anglo-Welsh' poetry anthologies by male editors in 1968 and 1978 showed ratios of 1:23 and 1:15 respectively, and that short-story anthologies in 1970 and 1976 demonstrated a similar imbalance.[xiii] The

prefaces to those anthologies, in which the editors discussed their criteria for inclusion, reinforce her point that male editors had naturalised the notion that the Anglo-Welsh writer

was typically male. In his influential *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (1968), for example, Glyn Jones presented Welsh women writers as uninteresting because their work lacked "that mysterious seminal quality…which make[s] other writers [i.e. Jones] warm to" it, declaring that he "could only write at any length and with understanding about the books of men with whom I have made personal contact".[xiv] His comment creates the picture of a (literally) old boys' network operating in the early days of Anglo-Welsh literary criticism, which demonstrates exactly how impervious it had become to those outside the all-male club.

As a result of this gender imbalance and these entrenched attitudes, when the Association of Welsh Writing in English was established in 1985 the majority of its founding members were male academics, and the majority of the writers on the first syllabus for the MA in Welsh Writing in English at Swansea University in the same year (a course which led to the later establishment of the Centre for Research into English Writing in Wales) were also male. CREW has developed widely since then and its work and publications have grown to include substantial work by and about women writers, but it is noticeable that the archives it holds - which provide the material for a substantial proportion of the research it generates - relate exclusively to male figures: Raymond Williams, Richard Burton, Ron Berry and Alun Richards.[xv] As the field expanded, therefore, it is not surprising that its evolving canon was also almost exclusively masculine.

Over the last twenty years, however, an increasing number of female critics (for example, Jane Aaron, Kirsti Bohata, Catherine Brennan, Moira Dearnley, Katie Gramich, Sarah Prescott and Diana Wallace) have contributed to the important on-going project to rehabilitate the writing of Welsh women by pushing back from the twentieth century into the seventeenth, so that the emerging new canon is far wider in its scope in terms of historical period as well as of gender. Most of this critical work focuses on women who wrote poetry and fiction, which were the genres most favoured by women writing for adults. A survey by

Nigel Cross of books published in Britain in the nineteenth century found that of women writers, half wrote children's books, one-third were novelists and 14% were poets; only 3% of female authors wrote "other types of literature, for example philosophy, history and economics", which seems to approximate to 'serious non-fiction for adults.[xvi] Although his results are suspiciously-tidy whole percentages and exact fractions without raw data, the difference between genres in his figures is sufficiently wide to make it clear that the work of women like Williams who wrote 'serious non-fiction' fell outside the standard parameters.

As a woman writer Jane Williams was, thus, already in a small minority: she wrote no novels, and only two of her nine books were collections of poetry *(Miscellaneous Poems* and *Celtic Fables).* Her other published works fall into the categories of history (*The History of Wales derived from Authentic Sources*), biography (of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc and of Elizabeth Davis/Betsy Cadwaladyr), literary criticism (*The Literary Women of England*), an analysis of the 1847 Reports on education in Wales (*Artegall*), and religion (*Twenty Essays* and *Brief Remarks on a Tract entitled 'A Call to the Converted'*). The majority of her published writings, therefore, put her among the 3% of women writers producing 'serious non-fiction' and since, according to Cross, women writers were responsible for only 20% of books published in the nineteenth century in Britain, Williams's work puts her into a statistically-irrelevant sub-category of approximately 0.6%. As the majority of books by women have been poetry and fiction, it is entirely rational that when writing by Welsh women began to receive critical attention it was work in those genres that first attracted detailed examination, both in relation to individual writers and in overviews of women's writing during the nineteenthe century. Jane Aaron's books on women's writing in Wales in both languages during that period, for example, which offer the basis for the establishment of a new canon have most to say about work in the genres of poetry and the

novel for exactly this reason.[xvii] The effect of this inevitable concentration on these genres, however, has been that other genres have attracted less interest, although there are hopeful signs. Of the twenty-one English-language books reissued to date in the series of Honno Classics (books of Welsh interest by women, which are felt to deserve re-publication), seventeen are fiction and one is a ground-breaking anthology of women's poetry from the seventeen to twentieth centuries edited by Katie Gramich and Catherine Brennan, two of the pioneering critics mentioned above, and the book provides a powerful riposte to the male critics who apparently regarded Welsh women's poetry as unworthy of attention.[xviii] The other three are 'serious non-fiction': an 'autobiography' and two collections of political writings. The 'autobiography' is Williams's *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis a Balaclava Nurse* (first published in 1857) and one of the collections of political writings, *The Very Salt of Life* (2007), includes extracts from *Artegall*, her analysis of the 1847 Reports on education in Wales. This re-publication is significant not only in terms of Williams's work, but in relation to the availability and reception of the writing of Welsh women of previous generations, whose work sits outside the more 'traditionally female' genres of poetry and the novel; it suggests that a change in the treatment of women's writing in Wales and a shift in attitudes to the genres in which they operate may at last be beginning.

As was argued above, the combination of Williams's gender and the historical period in which she wrote excluded her from consideration by the first wave of (male) critics of Welsh

Writing in English; her choice of genres - very much minority genres in relation to Welsh women's writing in the nineteenth century - has hitherto resulted in lack of detailed interest in her work by the second wave, of critics who argue for attention to be given to women poets and novelists. Powerful generic reasons can therefore be adduced for the relative critical neglect suffered by her work and the work of other Welsh women writing in a wider range of genres than poetry and the novel: for example, Angharad Llwyd, Augusta Hall, Gwyneth

Vaughan, Nora Philipps and Anna Jones. A field of literary criticism which regards work outside the two most popular genres as an anomaly clearly ignores the opportunity to widen its scope and deepen its level of analysis. A 'third wave' of criticism within the field of Welsh Writing in English which establishes new and more inclusive parameters is therefore not only necessary but, I would argue, seriously overdue. The reasons for Williams's current exclusion from the field are not only generic but specific, and they centre on the varied and unstable nature of her literary, social, cultural and national identities.

Jane Williams's literary identity: a damaging lack of clarity

As already established, Williams worked in a wide range of genres. Apart from a biographical essay by Maxwell Fraser in 1961 and several pages on Artegall in Aaron's *Pur fel y Dur* and *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales,* acknowledgement of her literary existence has been confined to reference books and local histories, and the multiplicity of the genres in which she wrote has presented their authors with a problem of classification.[xix] The fact that her body of work resists tidy categorisation and therefore a clear literary identity, suggests a further reason for the previous lack of interest.

To complicate further this difficulty of classification, some compilers of reference books have confused her with two other women with the same name - most frequently with Maria Jane Williams (1795-1873), the musician and collector of Gwent folk-songs, whose membership of the 'Llanover Circle' during the same period, and habit of being known as 'Jane Williams' *tout court,* has added - and still adds - to the confusion. However, at least Maria Jane Williams and Jane Williams the subject of this thesis can be distinguished by their bardic names, respectively 'Llinos' and 'Ysgafell'; this is not possible with another Jane Williams, wife of Edward Williams the friend of Shelley. *The Location Register of English*

Literary Manuscripts and Letters for the nineteenth century, while listing several letters by Ysgafell, also includes a letter from the 'other' Jane Williams to Edward Trelawney.[xx] Perhaps as a consequence, Peter Bell's *Victorian Women: an Index to Biographies and Memoirs* begins the relevant entry "Williams, Jane, 1806-85; Welsh historian and friend of Shelley", and directs the reader to a collection of letters from Thomas Jefferson Hogg (which therefore relate to the Jane Williams who knew Shelley) and to a book entitled *Shelley's Jane Williams*; there are no references to anything written by Ysgafell. [xxi]

Another twentieth-century account of Ysgafell mixes the accurate with the inaccurate and the misleading; Deborah Fisher's *Who's Who in Welsh History* describes her as "author, poet, translator, historian, educationist and musician".[xxii] "Translator" probably refers to Williams's published translation from French of an article by Dr Carl Meyer - which was apparently so unimportant to her that she omitted it from her list of published works - and "educationist" most likely derives from a misunderstanding of Williams's response to the 1847 Reports on Education in Wales; "musician" presumably misidentifies Ysgafell as Llinos.[xxiii] Even when writers who mention her work correctly identify her and the genres she worked in, however, the number of those genres has led to a further blurring of her literary identity.

To many she is primarily a historian: for example, Edwin Poole in 1886, *The Dictionary of National Biography* in 1901, T. R. Roberts in 1908 (who classified Williams as an honorary Welshman), Matthew Owen in 1911, *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography* in 1959, and Deirdre Beddoe in 1987.[xxiv] Aaron, the most recent critic to discuss her work, focusses her comments on *Artegall*, as mentioned above. Some compilers of reference books have avoided having to categorise her work by describing her as a "miscellaneous writer" (T. R. Roberts and *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography* use this label in addition to describing her as a historian).[xxv] Others opt for "authoress", a term both uninformative as to genre and carrying the trivialising connotations of the suffix '-ess'.[xxvi] Some compliers of reference books have

obliterated her completely from the record; for example, the entries on Elizabeth Davis/Betsy Cadwaladyr in *Welsh National Heroes* [sic] (2002) and in *Wikipedia* both state as a fact that Davis/Cadwaladyr herself "wrote her autobiography".[xxvii] It is possible that if Williams had written in only one genre or at most two - especially poetry and fiction - her literary personality would have been more clearly defined and she might have been considered a more appropriate candidate for literary rehabilitation. As well as the generic reasons for her exclusion from the field of Welsh Writing in English, there are further specific reasons which relate to her biography and family background, and which centre on her connections with, and relation to, Wales and on the personal, geographical and national identities she derived from that relation.

Where did she belong? Williams's multiple identities

If Williams is to qualify as a Welsh author writing in English, her inclusion must fulfil a range of criteria; for the purposes of this discussion I wish to distinguish between her biographical *connections* to Wales (descent, family home, residence, etc.) and her *relation* to Wales: i. e. the affective aspects of her position *vis-à-vis* the country. A major element of the project of this thesis is to reconstruct Williams's biography, and since it is important to establish (as far as now possible) her biographical connections with Wales before considering how they mesh with her relation to it, I wish to turn first to the facts of her life and family background.

A biography, written during the subject's lifetime or soon after their death, when personal papers are available and memories of relatives, friends and associates are still fresh, can be crucial in bringing together, and putting into the public domain, information and materials which would otherwise be lost (ironically, Williams's biography of the Rev. Thomas Price

(Carnhuanawc) provides an excellent example). The fact that no biography was written of Williams meant not only that much contemporary documentary and oral material about her, her work and her family was lost for ever but that there was no general record of her authorial career (as with many women writers over the centuries) which might have led to her receiving biographical or critical attention from later writers.

Williams herself seems to have envisaged - or perhaps merely hoped for - a biography. In her Will she left to her executors (Emma Shaw Lefevre, a friend, and Eleanor Marsh Williams, a niece):

> all my Copies of my own published works found in my possession bearing my own autograph corrections and additions together with all my literary manuscripts note books pocket books letters and written papers of every kind…Upon trust to carefully and conscientiously preserve the things thus committed to their care until some male or female descendant of my Parents David and Eleanor Williams shall manifestly prove to be capable of rightly valuing using and transmitting them in the absolute and uncontrolled opinion of my Trustees [her executors] and that my Trustees without partiality or bias shall then deliver the object of this Trust I hereby empower my last surviving Trustee to dispose of the things according to her judgment by Will or codicil or otherwise…
>
> (Will made 24 October 1883, proved 28 March 1885)

The fact that Williams carefully specified that all her working materials (her "own autograph corrections and additions" to her "published works" as well as her "note books pocket books letters and written papers of every kind") were to be preserved and "deliver[ed]" to a suitable recipient suggests that she hoped for a literary biography, of the sort she had written of Carnhuanawc (and for which she had had access to his private papers). When she made her Will there were over twenty living descendants of her parents who were old enough for their literary and historical interests and abilities - or lack of them - to have become apparent; since

she did not name any as recipients of her papers, it must be assumed that none were "capable of rightly valuing using and transmitting them" in her eyes and that she was hoping that succeeding generations would do better. Her executors seem to have been equally unimpressed by the biographical capacities of her relatives; her papers were passed to her younger executor, her niece Eleanor Marsh Williams, who in her Will (made in 1903) left them to her own executors, her cousin Constance Mills (daughter of Jane Williams's youngest sister) and her niece Arabella Florence Ryan (grand-daughter of Jane Williams's eldest brother) - presumably for Mills and Ryan to preserve them in case a suitable recipient emerged in the following generation, since if they themselves had been envisaged as future biographers themselves the relevant materials would have been passed on to them before Marsh Williams's death in 1928. Mills died in 1926, and Ryan in 1939; although both made Wills, neither holds any reference to Jane William's papers. These family members had moved apart geographically (Marsh Williams to Hereford, Mills to Talgarth, Ryan to Littlehampton),[xxviii] and most of the original documents were apparently lost or destroyed at some point (although a very small proportion has recently emerged).[xxix] While a biography written or supervised by a family member might not have been complete or entirely reliable, it would at least have provided a starting-point for further biographical investigations; if Williams's papers had survived, at least part of her biography could have been reconstructed. The lack of either has left a void, especially in relation to her early years, which has been filled by inaccuracies and speculations presented as fact. Since Williams's claim to be a Welsh author who wrote in English depends on both her biographical connections with, and her affective relation to, Wales, constructing her biography - however many unavoidable gaps and discontinuities it contains - is the necessary precursor to an analysis of the ways in which she located herself in relation to Welsh literature, history, language, culture and society.

Unfortunately much about Williams's early life has been deeply contentious, including so basic a fact as her place of birth. Breconshire writers have claimed that Williams was born in Breconshire, and most have been more specific, associating her with the village of Talgarth in general and with the house Neuadd Felen (in the centre of the village) in particular, although Poole and Jones respectively locate her birth in the Talgarth "neighbourhood" and "district" rather than the village itself.[xxx] The 1900 edition of the *Dictionary of National Biography* states that she was born in Riley Street, Chelsea, but Maxwell Fraser discovered from the Chelsea Poor Rate Tax Books that, since Williams's family was not living in Riley Street at her birth in 1806, Williams was not born there, and recorded this in her 1961 article.[xxxi] This has been ignored, however, by many later writers who prefer the account in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.[xxxii]

Other writers accept that she was born in Chelsea and follow the *Dictionary of National Biography* in stating that Williams spent "the first half of her life" in Talgarth because of her weak health, sometimes with embellishments; Deirdre Beddoe says that "since [Williams] was not a strong girl, she was sent to the fresh air of Neuadd Felen, near Talgarth, Brecon[shire], where she was to spend a great deal of her life".[xxxiii] This inaccurate location of Neuadd Felen as "near" Talgarth, rather than in its centre, is best explained by a lack of knowledge of Talgarth and a misunderstanding of the statements by Poole and Theophilus Jones which locate Williams's birth in the "neighbourhood" or "district" of Talgarth; these are most likely to be based on vague memories by informants that the Williams family had lived at Aberenig House - then outside Talgarth - before they moved to Neuadd Felen.

As this demonstrates, the documentary evidence relating to Williams's early life is sparse and unreliable. Some writers, accepting that Williams spent her early life in Talgarth, have clearly wondered why a weak child would have been sent many miles from her family to one particular house in one particular village, and have decided that relatives of the Williams

family must have been living there; Beddoe's phrasing carries a similar implication.[xxxiv] Fraser's view, that the Williams family moved to Neuadd Felen in 1820 shortly after leaving Riley Street, implies that the hospitable relatives who had lived there had considerately either died off or moved out when the Williams family arrived.[xxxv] In spite of extensive research I have discovered no documentary evidence which places Williams or her family in the Talgarth-Glasbury area, or in any other part of Wales, until 1824 when she was eighteen years old, and internal evidence from her writings, especially *Miscellaneous Poems* and *Artegall*, supports this (and will be discussed later). The following chapters examine Williams's books in chronological order, and details of her biography will be considered in relation to them; at this point I wish merely to sketch the most important aspects of her life to demonstrate the ways in which it involved the crossing and re-crossing of borders, boundaries and lines of demarcation.

Jane Williams: writing "out of her history"

Andrew Dawson and Mark Johnson have discussed the ways in which "[our] experience of self and place is located in the movements between and in acts of identification with other possible selves and places" and have argued that "the place we are in at present is a condition of inbetween-ness".[xxxvi] Williams's life involved crossing and re-crossing borders, boundaries and lines of demarcation - some national, geographical and linguistic, others of social class and position and yet others of financial and educational status - and in many cases these movements marked not only change but loss or lack of clarity about the corresponding aspects of her personal, social, literary and national identities. Some of these border-crossings were forced on her by circumstances, while others were (as far as can now be recovered) her own deliberate decision; all had effects on her perception of herself and her awareness of her

"condition of inbetween-ness", with crucial implications for her writing. One effect of borders, boundaries and lines of demarcation is to make obvious which side of the boundary one is on, and therefore to make one's position in relation to it inescapably clear; straddling the boundary implies another, also clearly-defined, position.

J. R. V. Prescott makes a useful distinction between boundaries (lines on a map, fences or walls on the ground), and "the adjacent areas which fringe the boundary called a border". [xxxvii] This allows for the fact that a border area is essentially fluid; in the words of Joel Migdal, "Borders shift; they leak; and they hold various sorts of meaning for different people" [xxxviii] Shields's definition of liminality has already been discussed, and I wish to use it also in Dawson and Johnson's more general sense of 'betwixt and between', of being both 'here and there' in someone simultaneously aware of where they are (geographically, socially, financially, etc.) in the present and of where they have been, in the same senses, in the (possibly recent) past. Dawson and Johnson suggest that exiles, rather than seeing the locations of the past and the present as binary opposites and therefore mutually exclusive, regard them as "both/and".[xxxix] Williams's life and work both demonstrate her liminal status, and the shifts and nuances of that status present another reason for the inability of the current parameters of Welsh writing in English to accommodate her - and therefore a further reason for the necessity of those parameters to be modified. While valuable work in this area has been done on the work of poets and novelists, a similar analysis has yet to be performed for work in the genres of Williams's most important, and most characteristic, writing.[xl]

Williams's family background and life

Williams was born in Chelsea, but at 35 Sloane Square where her family was living from 1803-9 and not in Riley Street, as claimed in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.[xli] She

was the second child and eldest daughter of Eleanor and David Williams, who had eight children in all (three sons and five daughters, one of whom died in infancy). Eleanor Williams was English, the daughter and heiress of a successful City of London banker - who, however, was a younger son from rural Middlesex. David Williams was a Welshman from a family which had owned a large estate, Ysgafell, near Newtown (Montgomeryshire), but who had himself been born and brought up in a village in Radnorshire: Evenjobb, near the boundary between Wales and England and close to Offa's Dyke.[xlii] David Williams's father sold the Ysgafell estate and (apparently) spent the proceeds;[xliii] at the age of seventeen David Williams started work in the Navy Office in London, his post gained through the recommendation of a relative. He later worked at the naval bases in Portsmouth and Sheerness before returning to the headquarters of the Navy Office in London, never rising above the position of Clerk Third Class (and ninth in the order of seniority of Third-Class Clerks) and consequently receiving a very low salary.[xliv] The Williams family, however, maintained an affluent life-style on the investments which his wife had inherited.[xlv] Williams later told a friend that "from birth, she had been accustomed to comfort, even luxury", and *Miscellaneous Poems*, published when she was eighteen, demonstrated that she had received an excellent education which allowed her to develop her intellectual interests.[xlvi]

When Williams was in her teens - apparently, her mid-teens - her family lost most of their money, and in 1820, when she was fourteen, they left their rented house in Chelsea apparently in some haste.[xlvii] I have found no further records which indicate the whereabouts of any of the Williams family until she published *Miscellaneous Poems* in 1824; for the next twenty years surviving evidence (which will be discussed in the following chapter) puts her in the village of Glasbury, first working as the equivalent of an an *au pair* and later as paid companion to a rich landowner. The parish of Glasbury straddled the boundary between Radnorshire and Breconshire; for both her jobs Williams was living in the less populous,

Breconshire, section, separated by the Wye from the village of Glasbury itself, which was in Radnorshire.[xlviii] On the death of her employer in 1845 she inherited £100 a year, and rejoined her family, who by then were living at Neuadd Felen in Talgarth;[xlix] by this time she had made the acquaintance of Augusta Hall (later Lady Llanover) and become a frequent visitor to Llanover Court and a member of the so-called 'Llanover Circle'.[l] In 1855, after her mother had died and her brother Edward and his wife had moved into Neuadd Felen she left for London; she visited Wales from time to time but never returned to live there.[li]

Even this rapid biographical sketch shows her liminal position: nationally (moving from England to Wales and then back), geographically (her family's moves from city to the countryside, and one county to another) and socially (the loss of status when the paternal family estate was sold followed by the rise in status permitted by her mother's inherited money, followed by a second loss when its disappearance required Williams to become a domestic employee). A boundary crossing which was even more important in relation to her writing was that from a schoolgirl receiving an English education and growing up in England but aware of the Welsh roots of her father's family, to that of a woman living in Wales who learned Welsh, read widely in Welsh literature and history, took a keen interest in the culture and social customs of the Welsh people around her and drew on all this in her writing; she made a further significant transition in her liminal status when she returned to live in London in her late forties and continued to draw on her knowledge of Wales and Welsh sources in much of her work. Her affective relation to Wales constitutes one of the most significant arguments for a shift in the paradigms of Welsh Writing in English which would allow the field to accommodate her and her work, and I wish now briefly to consider one of its most important elements.

Williams and Wales: defining her territory, marking her boundaries

Williams's own most explicit description of her relation to Wales appears almost at the end of her writing career and after the publication of her last book in 1869. By this time she was in her mid-sixties; her self-description cannot be assumed to hold good for any other period of her life, but it is nevertheless very revealing. In 1871 she applied to the Royal Literary Fund for a grant on the grounds of financial hardship; the third question on the application form asked "Where born?" The purpose of the question was to establish whether the applicant had been born in England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland (in which case the application would be considered automatically) or elsewhere (in which case eligibility for a grant would depend on the length of residence in Britain, and the language and subject-matter of the applicant's published works, etc.). Williams's reply to the question "Where born?" was "Welsh by descent and long residence, but born in Chelsea"; the implications of her answer are illuminating in several ways.[lii]

She would have understood the reasons for the question, and that the one word "Chelsea" would have been sufficient - indeed, more than sufficient, since the Fund's Trustees wished to know only whether she had been born in the British Isles. In context, therefore, her assertion of Welshness is completely irrelevant, and her apparent need to support it by explaining the criteria used ("descent and long residence") is also revealing - the latter criterion particularly so, since she had moved from Wales to London sixteen years before she made the application, and had lived in England for almost as long as she had lived in Wales (thirty years to thirty-five). The way in which she structured her reply is also revealing; an entirely different effect would have been created if she had answered "Born in Chelsea (but) Welsh by descent and long residence", and the order in which she presents the information makes

her assertion of Welshness far more prominent, and therefore far more important, than her her assertion of Welshness far more prominent, and therefore far more important, than her actual place of birth. Her use of "but" to connect the two phrases is also suggestive; both the contrast it implies between the two parts of her answer, and her choice of which to make the more prominent, further stress her view of her Welshness as the most important part of her identity and implies that the precise location of her birth was the least important part of that identity. The inclusion of information which was both unasked for and irrelevant reveals some of Williams's preoccupations about her personal identity, certainly at that point in her life. This thesis will discuss how these concerns are expressed through her authorial identity at the different stages of her writing career.

Williams's relation to Welsh culture and society

As mentioned earlier, Williams learned Welsh, read widely in Welsh literature and history, took a keen interest in the culture and social customs of the Welsh people among whom she lived in rural Breconshire, and drew on all this in her writing. She was therefore embedded in Welsh life and culture - especially literary culture, through her friendship with Augusta Hall and her associates - to a much greater extent than many other authors of Welsh writing in English. This knowledge and interest, however, was acquired *after* she moved to Wales in her mid-teens; the assertion in the reference books mentioned above that she "spent the first half of her life" in Talgarth is undermined by Williams's own writings: for example, her statement in *Artegall* (written in 1847 when she was forty-one) that she had had "more than twenty years' experience of the Morals and Physical condition of the [Welsh] people".[liii] This statement was made to emphasise her long and deep knowledge of the Welsh people in comparison with the brief and superficial contact with Wales by the Commissioners who had

written the Reports she was criticising - a context in which she would have had every incentive to claim that her knowledge of Wales and the Welsh people extended back thirty or thirty-five years (which would have been possible if she had "spent the first half of her life in Wales") if this had been true. Her first book, *Miscellaneous Poems* (published when she was eighteen) contains two other suggestive pieces of evidence. A poem entitled 'Revenge', which spends fourteen lines on Edward I, does so only and entirely in relation to his campaigns against Scotland.[liv] Since this poem shows an extensive and detailed knowledge of English, medieval European and Roman history, it is difficult to believe that if Williams had been living in Wales since childhood she would not have learned something of Welsh history, in which case the fact and consequences of Edward I's invasion of Wales could hardly have escaped her. Further: *Miscellaneous Poems* was published by subscription, and the list of subscribers shows that, as well as her relations, many of her friends and acquaintances had been marshalled into buying copies; while a dozen subscribers have addresses in Glasbury like her, only one lived in Talgarth, where it seems her mother and younger siblings were living - and that one subscriber was the vicar, the person whom Anglican incomers to a parish were most likely to meet first.[lv] An attempt to identify the length and nature of Williams's biographical connections with Wales is essential before any attempt can be made to assess her affective relation to the country; the surviving evidence suggests strongly that she moved to live in Wales only as an adult, having spent her formative years in London and the south of England.

That Williams learned about Wales, its language, history, literature and culture as an adult inevitably affected her response to them. M. Wynn Thomas has commented that "Nothing makes us more aware of how interwoven with consciousness language is than our attempts to learn and use an unfamiliar and defamiliarising language".[lvi] The fact that Williams's formal

education ended when she was in her mid-teens, and that in both *Miscellaneous Poems* and her later writings she demonstrates an excellent knowledge of written French and of Latin suggests that her early education had included those subjects, but knowledge of two Romance languages would have offered little preparation for her first encounters with a Celtic language; and while its defamiliarising elements would have been immediately and acutely obvious to one whose first language was English, she would also have been aware that Welsh had been the language of her father's family (and he himself may well have spoken and understood a little).[lvii] It was a new and essentially unfamiliar language to her, but it was also part of her family's history, and therefore of her own; rather than seeing her (entirely English-language) past and her Welsh-speaking and -reading present as binary opposites, therefore, her situation in relation to them was closer to "both/and", in the words of Dawson and Johnson.

Her initial approach to the Welsh history and literature she read would also have been from the perspective of her English education, which would have made her aware, at least at surface level, of its difference and 'foreignness' from the facts and historical figures presented to her as 'history' and 'literature' during her formal education in England. Yet however superficially estranging this new view of the past and the literature it had produced might be, she would also have been aware that it had formed her paternal ancestors' lives and therefore was part of her own identity. Her later adoption of 'Ysgafell' as her bardic name - an apparently obscure reference, when 'Artegall' would have been a much more obvious choice - indicates not only an attempt to reclaim by her pen the literary (and perhaps moral) ownership of the estate sold by her paternal grandfather but also a clear and conscious assertion of her connection with not only a portion of the land of Wales but with her seventeenth-century ancestor, Henry Williams of Ysgafell, a friend and protégé of Vavasor Powell; her connection to him enabled her to stake her claim as the descendant of a notable

figure of Welsh history.[lviii] Whatever family stories or recollections of their life in Wales she might have heard from her father and his relatives which made her feel that her connections allowed her to claim that she was "Welsh by descent" and therefore had the right to claim an affective relation to Wales, her move to Wales in her mid- or late teens - almost certainly from her family's financial necessity rather than choice - would have inevitably made her aware that her formative years had been spent elsewhere, and that she approached Wales and its language, literature, history and culture as an incomer and not as a native. She was therefore in a situation where many of the subjects she spent much of her studying- and writing-life working on, and many of the subjects that became most important to her, were hers (by the attention she gave them, and her ancestral connections) and simultaneously not hers (in that she had not 'grown up knowing them' but had acquired her knowledge about them consciously and deliberately in adult life): that is, they were hers by birth but not hers from birth.

Where did she belong? Williams and the state of 'inbetween-ness'

Paul White has argued that "the act of migration [from one location to another or one situation to another] often relates to the calling into question of many of those aspects of identity that make up the individual's personality and psychological self-image"; he has further suggested that "shifts of identity are highly complex, sometimes unstable, and often have reversible elements built into them", and that this frequently leads to "ambivalence towards the past and the present".[lix] In Williams's case, this ambivalence related to both spatial and temporal elements of her personal history, which would have "call[ed] into question… many of those aspects that made up [her] personality and psychological self-image", and have led to "an ambivalence towards the past and the present", by the fact of

moving unexpectedly away from her home and settling in a previously-unknown place two hundred miles from the places familiar to her. This ambivalence can only have been exacerbated by the abrupt loss of financial and social position which turned her from a member of a family which employed others to an employee. The difference in language and culture of the place of her 'present' from that of her 'past' would have increased even further the process of calling into question aspects of her identity which she had previously taken for granted, with an added level of ambiguity in her response prompted by the fact that she knew the defamiliarising language were part of her personal heritage

Certainly her response to being in London, the place of her birth and much of her childhood, when she returned there on a visit with Augusta Hall in 1854 - apparently for the first time since her family had left more than thirty years earlier - shows "an ambivalence towards [her] past and present". Her first reaction to the city, in a letter written the day after her arrival, was to stress its familiarity: "I found London sights and sounds as familiar to me as if I had lived among them and recognised all the places w[hic]h I used to see years ago"; her second was to acknowledge it happily as her birthplace ("There is something I suppose in native air, for my friends tell me that I am improving in looks as much as I feel myself to be in strength"; original emphasis), and a third demonstrates her awareness of the social difference between her 'previous' and 'present' lives when the Duchess of Bedford, whom she had met through Hall, offered a place in her box at Drury Lane Theatre: "Little did I think years ago that my next opportunity of seeing a play w[oul]d be in such good company!"[lx] At this point Williams had lived in Wales for more than thirty years and there was no immediate prospect of this changing; her response to being in London again demonstrates exactly the sense of belonging

to two places and cultures, and simultaneously of not belonging to either of them completely and unproblematically, which Dawson and Johnson characterise as a sense of 'inbetween-ness'. Later, when Williams had moved to live permanently in London by her deliberate

choice she continued to write on Welsh subjects: *Celtic Fables Fairy Tales and Legends, chiefly from Ancient Welsh Originals; A History of Wales,* and two historical essays, 'Some particulars concerning the history of the parish of Glasbury' and 'Henry Williams of Ysgafell'.

Williams's first three publications, *Miscellaneous Poems* and two religious tracts (*Twenty Essays* and *Brief Remarks*) were composed within a framework of English literary and social culture; certainly the first of these includes a poem on a major event of Welsh history - the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd - but the subject had become popular with English poets in the period of fashionable Celticism in the previous half-century, and the choice did not in itself necessarily indicate a deep engagement with Welsh history.[lxi] From *Artegall* (her fourth book) onwards, however, her writings demonstrate exactly the characteristic of "both/and" identified by Dawson and Johnson. Her books are in English, their subject-matter is Welsh and her approach to that subject-matter is carefully framed to make it accessible to readers familiar with English literary culture: for example, *Artegall,* which demonstrates knowledge of Welsh history, the Welsh language, Welsh customs and Welsh rural society, bears the name of a character from the English literary canon (in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*), refers to such authorities on correct use of English as Dr Johnson, Pope, and the grammarian Lindley Murray, and was written to persuade and influence leading English opinion-formers. Williams's account of the life of Elizabeth Davis/Betsy Cadwaladyr is prefaced by a lengthy Introduction to explain Cadwaladyr's religious and cultural background in north Wales to English readers. Each chapter of *A History of Wales* begins with an epigraph which is not only in English but chosen from the English literary canon of previous centuries (Shakespeare, Spenser, Pope, Cowper, Thomson) and nineteenth-century writers already accepted as major literary figures (Wordsworth, Southey, Tennyson, Elizabeth Barret Browning).

By foregrounding her knowledge of the languages, literatures, histories and customs of both Wales and England, Williams was locating herself simultaneously on both sides of the boundary between the two cultures. Anthony P. Cohen has suggested that "the boundary represents the mask presented by the community to the outside world…it is the community's public face".[lxii] In her writing Williams located herself in a position from where she claimed to be able to see behind the masks of both the communities she knew: a position not always easy or comfortable, and one with inherent complexities and nuances. In an essay on Emyr Humphreys, M. Wynn Thomas quotes Bryan Mason Davies : "Ynom mae'r clawdd" (Offa's Dyke is within us).[lxiii] Williams's connections with and relations to both Wales and England meant that whichever of the two she located herself within at any given moment she could not help but be aware of the other.

Throughout her writing career, Williams's position in relation to the literary and social cultures of Wales was characterised not only by this "condition of inbetween-ness" but by its complex and unstable nature. It is this element which makes it impossible to impose an orderly classification on her work; it resists the imposition of a rigid conceptual grid. It is also this element which makes her claim to critical attention as an author within the field of Welsh writing in English particularly compelling. The introduction to this chapter set out the ways in which Williams's life and work meet the formal criteria for inclusion within the field: her claimed Welshness by "descent and residence", the Welsh sources and subjects of her published work, and the fact that they are embedded in Welsh literary culture. This thesis will argue that the complexity and nuances of her affective relation to the countries and literary cultures of both Wales and England, and the creative self-estrangement that was the inevitable consequence, makes her not only a significant nineteenth-century woman writer but a writer whose work has much to demonstrate about "the sense of 'betwixt and between', of being 'here and there' " which Dawson and Johnson identified as characteristic of cultural

and psychological liminality. Williams is a writer whose work requires rehabilitation; in order for that rehabilitation - and the rehabilitation of the other Welsh women who wrote in English in genres outside poetry and the novel - to be effected, the current parameters of Welsh Writing in English must be expanded to allow for their inclusion within the field. For Williams herself, the time is long overdue for her individual "song" to be allowed to emerge from "the configurations of silence/Through the one throat [she] happens to have".[lxiv]

Notes

i John Ormond, 'Boundaries', *Boundaries and other poems* (Llanrwst: Carreg Gwalch, Cyf', 2004), pp. 58-59.

ii Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 83.

iii Ned Thomas, 'Parallels and Paradigms', in *A Guide to Welsh Literature Vol. VII: Welsh Writing in English*, ed. by M. Wynn Thomas (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 310-26.

iv Katie Gramich, 'Both in and out of the Game: Welsh Writers and the British Dimension', in M. Wynn Thomas (2003), p. 257.

v Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 1.

vi Denis Balsom, 'The Three-Wales Model', in *The National Question Again: Welsh Political Identity in the 1980s*, ed. by John Osmond (Llandysul: Gomer, 1985), pp. 4-5.

vii M. Wynn Thomas, *Corresponding Cultures: the two literatures of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), pp. 53, 60, 49.

viii I am very grateful to Professor M. Wynn Thomas for information used in the first part of this section.

ix Raymond Garlick, *An Introduction to Anglo-Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1970), pp. 1, 8.

x Garlick, pp. 51-54.

xi Professor M. Wynn Thomas, personal communication, 14/11/13.

xii Daniel Williams, 'Introduction', in *Who Speaks for Wales? Nation, Identity, Culture,* by Raymond Williams, ed. by Daniel Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. xliii.

xiii Jane Aaron, 'Gender and Welsh Writing in English', *Planet* 203 (February 2011), pp. 4-15.

xiv Ibid, p. 10.

xv Information from the CREW website (via a link from Swansea University website.

xvi Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 167-68.

xvii Jane Aaron, *Pur fel y Dur: y Gymraes yn Llên Menywod y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Profysgol Cymru, 1998) and *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

xviii *Welsh Women's Poetry 1460-2001: An Anthology*, ed. by Katie Gramich and Catherine Brennan (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 2003).

xix Maxwell Fraser, 'Jane Williams (Ysgafell) 1806-1885', *Brycheiniog*, Vol. VII (1961), pp. 95-114; Aaron (1998), pp. 102-07, (2007), pp. 76-79.

xx *The Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters: Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Vol. III (London: British Library, 1995), p. 1002.

xxi Peter Bell, *Victorian Women: an Index to Biographies and Memoirs* (Edinburgh: P. Bell, c. 1989), no pagination.

xxii Deborah C. Fisher, *Who's Who in Welsh History* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1997), p. 157.

xxiii Royal Literary Fund MS (Loan 96), RLF 1/1841.

xxiv Edwin Poole, *The Illustrated History and Biography of Brecknockshire from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Brecknock: the author, 1886), p. 184; *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. LXI (1900), p. 411; T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen*, Vol. I (Cardiff; Merthyr Tydfil: The Educational Publishing Company, 1908), p. 565; Matthew Owen, *The Story of Breconshire* (Cardiff: The Educational Publishing Company, 1911), p. 172; *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (London: The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1959), pp. 1044-45; Deirdre Beddoe, 'Introduction', *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis: Betsy Cadwaladyr a Balaclava Nurse*, ed. by Jane Williams (Ysgafell) (Dinas Powys: Honno Press, 1987), p. xiv.

xxv See the references above to T. R. Roberts and the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography.*

xxvi Theophilus Jones, *A History of the County of Brecknock*, Vol. I (Brecon: Edwin Davies, 1898 edn), p. 50; *The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales*, ed. by

Meic Stephens (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 778; *Gwyddionadur Cymru*, ed. by John Davies, Menna Baines, Nigel Jenkins, Peredur I. Lynch (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2008), p. 963.

xxvii Alun Roberts, *Welsh National Heroes* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2002), p. 70; *Wikipedia.*

xxviii Death certificates of: Eleanor March Williams (Hereford, 1928, no. 225), Constance Mills (Hay: Talgarth sub-district, 1926, np. 26), Arabella Ryan (Littlehampton, 1939, no. 366).

xxix A small group of the papers held by Eleanor March Williams was acquired by the National Library of Wales in April 2014 (NLW MS 24051F). Apparently nothing further is known of the other documents mentioned in Jane Williams's will.

xxx Poole, p. 327; Theophilus Jones, first page (no pagination); Matthew Owen, p. 172.

xxxi Fraser (1961), pp. 96-97.

xxxii Terry Breverton, *100 Great Welshwomen* (Sain Tathan: Wales Books, 2001), p. 284; Chris Price, ed. *Hanes*, Issue 10 (Jan. 2003), pp. 9-10; the current on-line version of the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography.*

xxxiii Beddoe, p. x.

xxxiv Poole, p. 103; T. R. Roberts, p. 565; Matthew Owen, p. 172.

xxxv Fraser (1961), p. 97.

xxxvi Andrew Dawson and Mark Johnson, 'Migration, exile and landscapes of the imagination', in *Contested Landscapes: Movement, Exile and Place*, ed. by H. Bender and F. Gales (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2001), p. 330.

xxxvii J. V. R. Prescott, *Boundaries and Frontiers* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), p. 12.

xxxviii Joel Migdal, ' Introduction', in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. by Joel Migdal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

xxxix Dawson and Johnson, pp. 318, 330.

xl See, for example, the essays by Katie Gramich, John Powell Ward, Tony Brown, and M. Wynn Thomas, in M. Wynn Thomas (2003).

xli See Chelsea Poor Rate Tax Books; 1803: Pt. II, Michaelmas Qtr., p. 21, Christmas Qtr., p. 27; 1804: Pt. II, Lady Day, Midsummer and Michaelmas Qtrs., p. 27; Christmas Qtr., p. 29; 1805: Pt. II, Lady Day and Midsummer Qtrs., p. 27, Michaelmas Qtr., p. 30, Christmas Qtr., p. 31; 1806: Lady Day and Midsummer Qtrs., p. 31, Michaelmas and Christmas Qtrs., p. 32; 1807: Lady Day Qtr., Pt. II, p. 32, Midsummer Qtr., Pt. IV, p. 23, Michaelmas and Christmas Qtrs., Pt. IV, p. 24; 1808: Pt. IV, all Qtrs., p. 24.

xlii Old Radnor Parish Register; NLW MS 24051F, ff.62ff.

xliii Will of Henry Williams of Evenjobb, made 18 July 1800, proved 22 December 1800.

xliv See *The British Imperial Calendar for 1813*, compiled by B. P. Capper (London: printed for Winchester and others, 1812), p. 151, and Admiralty files ADM 7/20, p. 35-36; 7/817, p. 17; 7/818, p. 107.

xlv See the Will of Robert Marsh, made 30 April 1799, proved 25 June 1800 (PROB11/1344).

xlvi RLF MS, p. 5.

xlvii The Chelsea Poor Rate Tax Books show that the Williams family lived at 12 Riley Street from the Lady Day Quarter of 1817 until the Midsummer Quarter of 1820. The records for the Michaelmas Quarter of 1820 have the name 'David Williams' written in the same shade of ink as the surrounding entries (so presumably at the same time) but crossed through in a different ink and the capital letter 'E' - the tax clerks' code for a house left empty - inserted. The house remained unoccupied for more than a year.

xlviii At the 1821 Census the population of the part of Glasbury in Breconshire was 152, that of the part in Radnorshire was 728.

xlix See the Will of Isabella Hughes (PROB11/2021).

l To avoid confusion, Augusta Hall (1802-96), whose name changed from Augusta Waddington to Mrs Hall to Lady Hall to Lady Llanover, will be referred to by the name she bore when Williams first knew her.

li See the marriage certificate of Edward Williams and Catherine Fletcher (Staunton-on-Arrow, 1854, no. 56) and the 1861 and 1871 Census Returns for Neuadd Felen, Talgarth (sub-district of Hay).

lii RLF MS, p. 1.

liii Jane Williams (1848), p. 17.

liv Jane Williams (1824), pp. 6-7.

lv Ibid, p. vi.

lvi M. Wynn Thomas (1999), p. 61.

lvii Information from Dr David Parsons (Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies), 22/11/13.

lviii See, for example, Thomas Richards, *Religious Developments in Wales (1654-1662)* (London: The National Eisteddfod Association, 1923), pp. 2, 28, 393; T. M. Bassett, *The Welsh Baptists* (Swansea: Ilston House, 1977), pp. 17, 30, 37, 49, 52; Geraint H. Jenkins, *Protestant Dissenters in Wales 1639-1689* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), p. 52.

lix Paul White, 'Geography, Literature and Migrations', in *Writing across Worlds: Literature and Migration*, ed. by R. King, J. Connell and P. White (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 2-3.

lx NLW MS 26/9, Feb. 18, 28, and April 6, 1854.

lxi See, for example, Joseph Cottle's *The Fall of Cambria* (1804), which recounts the same event at inordinate length and with impressive historical inaccuracy.

lxii Anthony P. Cohen, 'Introduction', in *Belonging: identity and social organisation in British rural cultures*, ed. by Anthony P. Cohen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), p.2.

lxiii M. Wynn Thomas, *Internal Difference: Twentieth-Century Writing in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), p. 79.

lxiv See Note i.

CHAPTER 2

Miscellaneous Poems and the birth of a writer

No piece of writing by Williams is known to have survived from her childhood and early adolescence, and although some of her later writing contains references to her early life, it needs to be treated with caution, like all adult descriptions of childhood. This study of her writing will therefore begin by examining her first book, *Miscellaneous Poems* (published in 1824 when she was eighteen) and the biographical context in which the poems were composed and the book self-published. The four years of Williams's life before the publication of *Miscellaneous Poems* saw a series of life-altering events which all related to dislocation, change and loss; this chapter will therefore consider the publication and literary context of *Miscellaneous Poems* in relation to place (especially the varied meanings and connotations of 'home'), to attitudes to social class in the first part of the nineteenth century, and to historically-determined views of Wales in this period.

Although very few details have survived of Williams's life in the four years before the publication of *Miscellaneous Poems*, some general points can be adduced. The loss of the investment income which her mother, Eleanor, had inherited meant the loss of the bourgeois comfort in which Jane Williams had grown up, and it seems that in the aftermath of their financial crash the Williams family followed the usual behaviour of the period by prioritising the futures of sons over daughters, and that a large portion of the remaining money was devoted to establishing Williams's eldest two brothers in their chosen professions (one

became an infantry officer, the other a solicitor). The two eldest daughters, Jane and her sister Eleanor - had to become self-supporting.

Williams's account of the childhood game which she and her siblings invented refers to a memory of watching her two youngest brothers playing the game "in the children's playroom" when the elder was five and the younger, two, years old in a context which suggests that the family was still living in a large house with servants.[i] Her account of the incident does not suggest that it was in any way remarkable, and its significance may lie rather in the fact that she remembered it as an example of the happiness and stability of her family's life before the financial crash changed everything (the sentence in which she describes this is verbless, which for a writer so aware of the demands of English syntax suggests both that at some level she regarded the experience as taking place outside chronological time and that she was unable to express it fully within the constraints of language). Whatever the precise date and circumstances of her family's financial loss, its long-term effects are clear: the family moved from Chelsea to Wales, and her life took a different course.

The context of the writing of 'Miscellaneous Poems'

After the Williams family left Chelsea the next point at which any of the family can be located is in April 1824, when Williams wrote the preface to *Miscellaneous Poems* from Pipton Cottage, Glasbury. No information has survived as to why she was there; however, given that the occupants (a couple called Morgan with small children)[ii] were apparently neither friends nor relatives and that Williams's family circumstances made it necessary for

her to be self-supporting, it seems most likely that her role was to look after, or help to look after, the children (since she had five younger siblings, she could plausibly be presented as experienced at dealing with small children). The years before the publication of *Miscellaneous Poems* were therefore marked by major changes in her life, in terms of location (from London and southern England to Wales), of her access to books and opportunities to study (her formal education seems to have ended at this point) and her future prospects (without a dowry it was unlikely that she would be able to marry a man of the same social class and educational background). More than this, however, the family loss of financial status would have called into question some fundamental elements of her social identity.

The family money had been inherited from her maternal grandfather, a City of London banker, but he had been a self-made man, a younger son from rural Middlesex who had gone to London to make his fortune. On her father's side, her paternal grandfather had sold the Ysgafell estate more than thirty years before, and because the estate had been previously rented out on a long lease, no members of her family had lived there for a century.[iii] It was therefore not possible to think of the loss of income from her mother's family as a temporary aberration in the history of a comfortably-affluent family; it was far more likely that it was her maternal grandfather's money-making abilities that had been the deviation from the family norm. In any case, the loss of her family's money resulted in a crucial loss of the family's social, as well as financial, status.

It has been argued that social stratification in nineteenth century Britain was determined by "some objective measurable and largely economic criteria such as source and style of income, occupation, years of education or size of assets"; certainly the Williams family had suffered a

sharp decline in social status by all these criteria.[iv] Further, if the above reading of Jane Williams's position in the household at Pipton Cottage is correct, it meant that she had crossed – downward – a crucial social line in nineteenth-century British society; that between those who employed others in their homes, and those who were employed in the homes of others. From being a member of a family which had employed several servants, she was now an employee (however genteel), and likely to remain in that position for the rest of her life. The resultant loss of social status and personal autonomy, and of the hopes and opportunities for her future life, can only have had deeply destabilising and undermining effects on her social, and to some degree personal, identity, and have created a profound sense of social and personal dislocation.

Further, the move to Glasbury unavoidably raised the question of Williams's relation to Wales. Her mother had grown up in Chelsea and the family had lived there until Jane Williams was six years old; her family regarded Chelsea as its 'real' home even when living elsewhere because of David Williams's work. Any move (especially one forced on them by adverse circumstances) would have undermined its members' sense of having a geographical base, an example of two of the aspects of 'place' identified by Tim Cresswell: as a material setting for social relations, and as the centre of "a sense of place, a feeling that we know what it's like to be 'there'".[v] The house in Chelsea to which the Williams family had moved after their return from Sheerness had become the family home and therefore possessed all the usual associations of 'home' described by Cresswell as "a centre of meaning, where people can be themselves", with the consequent feeling of dislocation and loss when the family moved from it (especially if, as the Poor Rate Tax Books suggest, they moved unexpectedly).[vi] The Williams family may have been staying with relatives or friends for some of the time between the summer of 1820 and 1823; by the end of this period Jane Williams was probably

living in Pipton Cottage, Glasbury (the reasons for suggesting that she had been living there for some time before she wrote the preface to *Miscellaneous Poems* will be discussed later). The size of Pipton Cottage, however, means that no member of her nuclear family could have been there with her, the Morgans and their children; possibly for the first time, she was on her own.[vii]

Pipton Cottage, however, was not merely in a remote location (surrounded by farmland on a narrow side-road, over a mile from the small village of Glasbury); it was in Wales.[viii] To the English in England, David Williams would have been an undifferentiated Welshman, but in Wales, the area in Wales he came from was important; he had been born and brought up in Radnorshire, near Offa's Dyke. The boundary between Wales and England was not and never had been an impermeable barrier, however; the relation between the inhabitants on either side of the border had been fluid for centuries. Further, when David Williams was sixteen his father moved the family over the border to Whitney-on-Wye in Herefordshire, so the Welsh side of Williams's family, who at Ysgafell had lived in an unequivocally Welsh - and Welsh-speaking - part of Wales, was doubly deracinated.[ix]

The point to be made here is that during the time when the majority of *Miscellaneous Poems* were written, Williams had lost the family's base in Chelsea where she had spent her earliest years and had moved not merely to a new location but to a new country. Although by descent she 'belonged' as much to Wales as to England, she did not move to live in either of the areas in Wales with which her family had connections (Ysgafell in Montgomeryshire and Evenjobb in Radnorshire) or elsewhere in the same counties. Further, the house where she was now living was the home of another family. The changes in her family's situation had resulted in dislocation (in both senses) and profound loss; her old home no longer existed, and her new residence was her home only as long as it suited the family whose home it 'really' was. Cresswell has pointed out that the standard description of a home as a haven and a place

where people can be themselves (for example, by Yi-Fu Tuan) is an essentially masculinist one, countered by Gillian Rose's reminder that a home can also be a place of drudgery, neglect and belittlement, and that power structures operate as strongly within the home as anywhere else.[x] Williams's position in the household at Pipton Cottage was an unmistakeable marker of the extent to which her family, and Williams personally, had lost power.

In these circumstances, to self-publish a collection of poems was a clear declaration of autonomy, a way of reclaiming through her writing some of the personal power she had lost. It also functioned as a way of wresting the right to decide an important element of her identity from those people and social forces (the Morgans, and the attitudes which saw the loss of her family's money as social 'degradation') who, in practical and financial terms, exerted control over her. It was an assertion that she was not a child-minder (or whatever was her precise role in the Morgan household): she was a writer.

This chapter will argue that these experiences of change, dislocation and loss (including loss of social, class, and to some degree personal, identity) led her to realise that previous unproblematic answers to the question "Where do I belong?" no longer held good, and that this both created the necessity, and gave her the opportunity, to construct a new identity for herself. It will further suggest that her response was to construct this new identity as a writer, and to develop a relation to Wales which, if it did not at this point imply a fully Welsh identity, at least allowed her to create a space in which the construction of a Welsh identity was possible. It will argue further that *Miscellaneous Poems* shows the first stage of this construction in progress.

The publication and organisation of 'Miscellaneous Poems'

The publication of *Miscellaneous Poems* by subscription was presumably a necessity rather than a matter of choice; for many women authors, in the eighteenth century and later, it was the only practical way of seeing their first book in print.[xi] The book lists 200 subscribers, who accounted for a total of 387 copies; the print-run was probably 400, unless optimism permitted 450. The subscribers include not only members of the extended Williams family and old family friends, but also members of the local 'great and good': important landowners, the local M. P. and four Anglican clergymen. The list is headed by Viscountess Hereford, who was not the most generous patron (she bought six copies, as did seven other subscribers; one bought ten and three bought twelve) and her name's prominence is to be attributed to her social position. To gain this degree of interest from a member of the nobility (who may not have known Williams personally) was something of a coup for an unknown eighteen-year-old, and follows the practice common in the eighteenth century and earlier of using the influence which attached to a name with a title. A female author (particularly one who was young and single) was wise to find a female patron in order to avoid any suggestion of scandal, and in this Williams followed eighteenth-century practice. A generous patron was most appropriately recognised by a Preface whose expression of gratitude verged on self-abasement. Lady Hereford's six copies apparently did not qualify her for personal recognition, however, and Williams's preface to *Miscellaneous Poems* was addressed to all her readers:

> The Authoress of the following poetical attempts begs permission to return her sincere thanks to the Ladies and Gentlemen who have honoured her by subscribing; and to assure them that she entertains a very grateful sense of their kindness.
>
> Conscious that, as poetical compositions, her verses have no claim to notice, she entreats that youth and circumstances may be taken into consideration, and hopes that

> her little production will be read and judged not with harsh criticism but with kind indulgence. (Jane Williams, 1824, p. vii)

As her poems attest, Williams had read widely in eighteenth-century English poetry, and her Preface follows the conventional model; she expresses her gratitude for her subscribers' "kindness" and presents herself as a suppliant for their good opinion of her verses (the explicit reference to their subscriptions, with its clear implication of money changing hands, could be seen as a youthful gaffe); the reference to her "circumstances" implies that they were aware of her family's financial difficulties. Her (conventional) use of the third person means that she was able to refer to herself proudly as "the Authoress", both asserting her status as a published writer and distancing herself from the more personal self-abasement which would have been required in the first person. The Preface, therefore, uses her awareness of the conventions of authorship and of the relation of an author to her patrons (subscribers) as a means of declaring what for Williams must have been its central point; that she was claiming a new identity for herself as an author. It is revealing that she published *Miscellaneous Poems* not merely under her own name rather than anonymously or pseudonymously, but that she used her full name rather than an asexual initial for her first name; convention might require her to declare in the Preface that "her verses ha[d] no claim to notice", but - perhaps exactly because of the "circumstances" in which she found herself - allowing herself to be identified as a published author was clearly very important to her.

The thirty-seven pages of *Miscellaneous Poems* contain twenty poems; no information is given on when or where individual poems were written, and there is no indication that their ordering within the book in any way reflects the order of composition. Only one poem provides explicit information as to its date ('On the death of the celebrated Napoleon

Buonaparte [sic]'), which seems to have been written soon after the news of his death reached Britain, and can therefore be dated to 1821, when Williams was fifteen. Other poems apparently refer to events in her life in the two or three years before publication, but so little information has survived about her early years that any dating based on this internal evidence can only be approximate. Since the purpose of this chapter is to examine what the poems indicate of the way Williams positioned herself in relation to Wales at this period of her life and how this positioning related to and was influenced by contemporary views of Welsh identity, the examination of the poems which follows will focus less on the purely literary and technical aspects of the poems and more on the information they provide on her perceptions and images of Wales.

Williams's poetic models

It is only to be expected that poems composed during the poet's mid-teens (and perhaps even earlier) should reflect her literary tastes, influences and education, and the poems are clearly derivative, especially of poetry written in the second half of the eighteenth century. Andrew Ashfield has traced the way in which a national English poetic canon first emerged in the 1790s and included much work by recently-dead poets (such as Akenside, Chatterton, Gray and Smart); he attributes this to the fact that copyright had not yet been established and that their poems could therefore be printed without payment. He further points out that this canon excluded female writers, not only those such as Charlotte Smith and Mary Robinson who were regarded as socially or politically undesirable because of their perceived marital difficulties, liberal connections and/or political views, but also other, 'safer', women authors such as Anna Seward, and that after 1810 the canon moved from promoting mid-eighteenth-century poets to a focus on the Romantics.[xii] Once a canon is established, additions are

relatively rare and usually require a lengthy and painstaking work of recovery; the women writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were outside the canon and remained so for generations – in spite of the fact that, as Anne K. Mellor records, the work of 339 women poets was published in Britain between 1760 and 1830, and the leading playwright of the period was a woman, Joanna Baillie. Although the majority of the reading public was female, the literary world and its most prominent and fashionable poets were the (male) Romantics, and many of them (Keats, Byron, Shelley, Thomas Moore, Leigh Hunt) were openly hostile to 'bluestockings' with literary interests.[xiii]

Given the prevailing view of the period that writing poetry was a masculine activity, it is not surprising that a woman growing up in the first quarter of the nineteenth century should have internalised the notion that writing poetry involved absorbing and reflecting the influences of her male predecessors; Williams's literary models are the canonical male poets of previous centuries, including Milton, Dryden and especially Gray. Although her poetry makes use of many of the tropes and much of the language of poets of the mid- and late eighteenth century she does not use the blank verse which many of them favoured for their most reflective and discursive writing (for example, Thomson's *The Seasons*, Cowper's *The Task*, Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, Young's *Night Thoughts*). Williams apparently preferred the discipline of strictly-rhymed and -scanned verse: quatrains of alternately-rhymed iambic tetrameters, rhyming couplets of iambic pentameters, sestets rhyming aabccb, etc. Shenstone is the only poet whose influence is overtly acknowledged ('A Pastoral in imitation of Shenstone'), in which she adopts the male persona of a shepherd in mourning for his shepherdess. This may have been because she had internalised so thoroughly the notion that poetic composition which aimed for literary seriousness was an exclusively masculine activity that she felt that a poem written by a woman in a female persona would have immediately been dismissed as not 'real poetry, or that to adopt the persona of one of

Shenstone's female characters might have attracted suspicion and rumour from readers who took literally the poem's use of the first person singular.

While some poems in the collection reflect influences of Milton ('The Life of a Spirit' also carries an epigraph from *Paradise Lost*), Dryden and Pope (especially in the use of rhyming iambic pentameters in two of the longest poems, 'Revenge' and 'A Welsh Bard's Lament'), several of the poems can perhaps best be considered in relation to mid-eighteenth-century English verse: the influence of Gray is particularly pervasive. While of course the poetic tropes summarised in "The paths of glory lead but to the grave" and "Alas, regardless of their doom,/The little victims play" had a history dating back to Classical Greece and Rome, Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' and 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College' had made them particularly fashionable,[xiv] and the note of graveyard melancholy found in much mid-eighteenth century verse is present in many of Williams's poems ('The Moss', 'On the soft cheek of beauty', 'The Maniac', 'The Peasant Maiden's Grave', 'On the Trunk of an Old Tree', 'On a Withered Rose', '12th Chapter [of] Ecclesiastes', 'On the Death of the celebrated Napoleon Buonaparte [sic]' and 'Gwernyfed Hall'). Williams uses these tropes to make a moral and religious point: the reader is urged to "[pause] while ambition's flowers yet are green" and "glory's wreaths, with tempting flowers bloom,…/And learn their frailty from Napoleon's tomb", while one who lives with religion need not envy "the rich and great" but rather, "in the dread hour of hov'ring death" will be envied by them.[xv] (One of the marks of Williams's youthful inexperience as a poet is that she does not trust her powers to communicate the points she wishes to make to her readers without stating them explicitly).

The trope of solitariness, identified by John Sitter as having emerged to great popularity in the mid-eighteenth century, is also echoed in Williams's poems, with the correlative distaste for worldly ambition and "pomp and grandeur".[xvi] To Williams, solitariness allows "musing meditation" which facilitates the composition of poetry and study as well as religious

contemplation ('Solitude'), and although companionship can give human warmth ("Bright glows the fire of friendship's youth"), the individual is ultimately alone "in affliction's gloomy hour".[xvii] The visit to the empty and abandoned Gwernyfed Hall is made in company ("*We*'ll seek the old romantic spot…/While there *our* footsteps stray" (emphasis added),[xviii] but, with one exception which will be discussed later, the other poems in the collection present their speakers and/or subjects as alone, explicitly or by implication, probably so in life and certainly in death ('Solitude', 'Oft the clouds', 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey', 'On the soft cheek', 'The Peasant Maiden's Grave', 'On the Trunk of an Old Tree', 'Night's hour is come', '12th Chapter [of] Ecclesiastes', 'Religion', 'Sink not my soul' and 'On a Withered Rose'). This solitariness can be positive ('Solitude', 'Religion') but can also be lonely ('Night's hour is come', 'Sink not my soul') or caused either by "madness" ('The Maniac' is alienated by his condition from "what once was dear") or by the death of the loved one: in 'A Pastoral in Imitation of Shenstone' the shepherd has been "[left] behind" "only to sigh".[xix] Taken together, the poems suggest that Williams had immersed herself in the works of the stalwarts of the English poetic canon, especially those of the second half of the eighteenth century, and that her view of what constituted poetry had been heavily influenced by her reading. Given the technical competence displayed in her handling of a variety of verse forms, it is likely that she had been composing, as well as reading, poetry for some time, which in itself would have affected her approach to what she read, shifting her response from that of a consumer only, to that of a practitioner who would look for what she could use and adapt in the work of others for her own literary purposes. In some cases the borrowing is overt: compare, for example, Gray's "[Some frail memorial]…implores the passing tribute of a sigh" with Williams's "That heart to feeling must be dead/Which sternly can deny/To pomp and grandeur when they're fled,/The tribute of a sigh", and Gray's "yonder ivy-mantled tow'r" with Williams's "yonder old dismantled tower".[xx] For Williams both the sigh and the condition of the tower mark the

loss of “pomp and grandeur”, whereas for Gray the sigh is elicited by memorials to “th’ unhonour’d dead” and the tower is part of the darkening landscape in which the only human presence is that of the (solitary) poet.[xxi]

The autobiographical poems in the collection

Whereas some of the poems have the character of poetic exercises ('On a Withered Rose', 'The Peasant Maiden’s Grave' and 'On the Trunk of an Old Tree', for example) five short untitled poems written in the first person seem considerably more personal, and one, 'Sink not, my soul' reads as if it had been written at a specific period in Williams's life. Its references to “sad misfortunes”, the loss of “hopes of this world’s happiness”, the arrival of Poverty and the approach of Want, the need to “[resign] fondly cherished hopes” and to “[part from] “best beloved friends” suggest it was composed after her family had lost its money, when the implications of this were beginning to bite, but before the move from London had taken place.[xxii]

The first part of the poem offers the internal dialogue of a divided self: the “soul” (which I take to denote “the seat of the emotions, feeling or sentiments: the emotional part of man’s [sic] nature”, a meaning attested from the ninth to the nineteenth centuries)[xxiii] is constantly urged by the "I" persona not to “sink (into despair)” or “yield to assailing mournful care”, but each exhortation is followed by a reason (prefaced by "tho' ") which refers to circumstances in which sinking into despair would be entirely understandable. In the second part of the poem the "I" offers a solution: that the soul should reflect that its sufferings are as nothing to Christ's and should ask for his help to bear them (interestingly, this is expressed as a wish or hope rather than a confident expectation: "May I when suffering feel that thou [Christ] art near!").[xxiv]

Williams had been brought up by a devoutly Anglican mother (as an anecdote in *The Origin, Progress and Rise of the Paper People* makes clear),[xxv] and demonstrated a strong religious faith throughout her life; the response to suffering and hardship expressed in "Sink not my soul" ("Think on thy Saviour's suffering here below,/Think on his blood, for ev'ry sinner shed")[xxvi] would have been both the only response she could acceptably express and the only response possible for her to envisage. Suffering and hardship, like everything else in life, came from God whose purposes were not for mortals to comprehend; the Christian's response, therefore, must be to accept them uncomplainingly and offer them up as a sacrifice to God. To protest or show resentment at their unfairness, or even to mourn what had been lost, was to question God's will and therefore came dangerously close to blasphemy. In the context of these religious beliefs, the references to the sufferings of Christ in the last eight lines of the poem close down firmly the subject of the "I"'s sufferings and make any further reference to them unthinkable. To a reader of William's period, the "grief", "pain" and "suffering" which the poem describes would have been subsumed into religious faith, and the matter resolved; a modern reader might wonder if the very real anguish which the poem reflects could be so tidily disposed of.

Since a major purpose of this study is to consider how Williams positioned herself in relation to Wales, I will examine as a separate group the three poems in the collection on specifically Welsh subjects. I wish to argue that, in contrast to an autobiographical poem like 'Sink not my soul', which refers directly to recent painful events in Williams's life before subsuming the pain into a conventional expression of religious faith, the three 'Welsh' poems in the collection enabled her to express the emotional effect of the changes in her life more powerfully and unreservedly. Two of these relate to place ('Gwernyfed Hall' and 'On the banks of the Llunvey'), and the third ('A Welsh Bard's Lamentation for the Death of the last Llewellyn Prince of Wales') to Welsh history.

Two Welsh poems of place

The two Welsh poems of place, 'Gwernyfed Hall' and 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey', are both located in the area of Wales where Williams was living when the collection was published; Gwernyfed Hall is approximately two miles from Pipton and the river Llyfni (Llunvey) passes close to Pipton Cottage itself. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that both poems were written after Williams moved to live with the Morgans.

It can be suggested that someone who has lived in several different places will view a new place of residence from the perspectives gained by having lived in the previous locations; for Williams, Pipton was at least the fifth place she had lived in, after Sloane Square in Chelsea, Portsmouth, Sheerness and Riley Street in Chelsea (and there may have been others between leaving Riley Street in 1820 and moving to Pipton by 1823). Cresswell has suggested that viewing the world as a set of places separate from each other is "both an act of defining and a particular way of seeing and knowing the world", and it can be argued that composing a poem on a particular place shows these acts of definition, seeing and knowing in process. [xxvii] The choice of two locations near her new home (with all the connotations of that word discussed earlier) is, I would argue, significant in several ways. Cresswell has argued that the aesthetic appreciation of place requires both the creation of a critical distance between the observer and the place observed, and "a sense of self-worth" in the observer arising from the ability to make this aesthetic appreciation; composing these poems may have allowed Williams to feel that as a writer she was able to exert the control over her immediate surroundings which was not possible in her daily life with the Morgans.[xxviii]

It has already been mentioned that 'Gwernyfed Hall' carries a heavy influence from Gray's 'Elegy written in a country churchyard', demonstrated both in its choice of tropes and in its

verbal echoes. However, her poem departs from its model in the relationship between the poem and its title. Gray's 'Elegy' presents generalised reflections on a universal human fate and carries a generalised title: 'Elegy written in *a* country churchyard' (emphasis added). By contrast, Williams's poem expresses general sentiments on the loss of past power and happiness, but bears a very specific title - and, moreover, a title which would have meant nothing to readers (including most of the subscribers) unfamiliar with the district in which Williams was living at the time.

Conversely, when the title of poems of this genre name a specific location, that naming often has a very specific function. A well-known Welsh poem probably written around 1780 by Evan Evans (Ieuan Fardd/Ieuan Brydydd Hir), who had been encouraged by Gray to translate and publish examples of medieval Welsh verse, is a case in point.[xxix] Like 'Gwernyfed Hall', Evans's poem 'Llys Ifor Hael' (the court of Ifor the Generous) is a meditation on the abandoned ruins of a once magnificent mansion and a lament for its lost greatness; the last line of its first *englyn*, "Mieri lle bu mawredd" (brambles where [once] was grandeur) could stand for an epitome of Williams's poem.[xxx] The title of Evans's poem, however, which specifies a location, carries a very powerful resonance, since Ifor Hael was regarded as the major patron of Dafydd ap Gwilym. Evans's poem is not only a lament for the ruined fabric of a building, but also for the decline and decay of the medieval bardic order of which Dafydd ap Gwilym was the best-known and perhaps the greatest representative; by extension, the poem is a lament for the loss of the social, literary and cultural system which supported and sustained that order. The title of Evans's poem is therefore a key which enables readers to understand the reference, and the relevance, of the poem which follows it. Gray's title and poem are both generic, Evans's title and poem are both specific; by contrast, 'Gwernyfed Hall' - a specific title followed by a generic poem - demonstrates a revealing mismatch.

Similarly, the genre of landscape poems conventionally required either a generic title followed by generic verse (for example, Shenstone's 'The Landscape'), or that a title relating to a specific place should precede a poem which was rooted, at least initially, in the place which had inspired it, even if this later modulated into more general reflections.[xxxi] Williams's 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey', however, gives the river no individualising qualities at all, so that it can stand for any river which is calmer in summer and rougher in winter; further, this particular Llynfi (there are several in Wales) would have been no better known outside its immediate vicinity than Gwernyfed Hall. It is also significant that both poems bear names which are not only specific but Welsh; it is not clear whether Williams had learned enough of the language by this period to know that both place-names are descriptive.[xxxii] To someone whose childhood and adolescence had been spent in England, the awareness that she was now living in a country where place-names as well as the speech of the people gave evidence of a language that was "unfamiliar and defamiliarising" to her (in the words of M. Wynn Thomas, quoted in Chapter I) would have emphasised the extent to which she was a stranger to the area; at the same time, the awareness that this language formed part of her personal heritage can only have heightened her sense of the "condition of inbetween-ness" which Dawson and Johnson identified (discussed in Chapter I). The contrast between the Welshness of the two poems' titles and the Englishness of the language and literary tropes of the poems mirrors the mismatch between the specificity of the titles and the generic nature of the poems themselves; setting the poems in their biographical and topographical contexts offers a perspective on this incongruence.

By the age of eighteen, when *Miscellaneous Poems* was published, Williams had crossed and re-crossed enough borders to have become aware of their propensity to leak and shift, and of the nuances and ambiguities that resulted. Paul White's comments (discussed in Chapter 1) on the ways in which an act of migration often calls into question many of those aspects of

identity that make up the individual's personality and psychological self-image are very pertinent here.[xxxiii] I wish to argue that the recent - and unchosen - migrations which Williams had experienced in the years before she wrote 'Gwernyfed Hall' and 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey' called into question many of those aspects of her psychological self-image and that the complexity of those shifts is given literary expression in the two poems of place. The history of Gwernyfed Hall and the location of the river Llynfi are of crucial importance in any attempt to understand the poems.

Gwernyfed Hall was built in the reign of Elizabeth I, and had been the seat of a gentry dynasty which owned large estates in the surrounding countryside.[xxxiv] In 1731 partially destroyed by fire (one wing was completely gutted and the rest of the house was damaged) and its owners chose not to rebuild it but to decamp to their other estate near Norwich - so "pomp and grandeur' had literally 'fled'. The habitable part of the house served for a time as accommodation for farm-workers, and the gutted wing had been used as a wagon-shed; so 'pomp and grandeur' had 'fled' metaphorically as well.[xxxv]

The name of the family which had owned the Hall, and whose decline and fall was so dramatically illustrated by its dilapidated state, was Williams, and during the period of the dynasty's greatest affluence and power in the early seventeenth century the head of the family was Sir David Williams (a rich and successful King's Bench judge), his wife was Eleanor and their son and heir was Henry.[xxxvi] The name of Jane Williams's father was David, her mother was Eleanor and her eldest brother was Henry. Set against the previous pomp and affluence of the Williams family of Gwernyfed, the neglected state of the Hall when Jane Williams saw it was a vivid illustration of 'life's uncertain lot' in general;[xxxvii] but although Williams's family had no connection with that of Gwernyfed Hall, the coincidence of the names of the Hall's previous occupants with those of her own close relatives cannot help but have made it a symbol for her of the contrast between past happiness and present desolation with a

particular and personal resonance - and which which would have evoked the loss of Ysgafell.[xxxviii]

The river Llynfi also had a particular, and very personal, significance for her. It is a tributary of the Wye, which at that time marked the boundary between Radnorshire and Breconshire, and therefore acted as a physical and unavoidable reminder of the division between them; the Llyfni's course took it close to Pipton Cottage. Further, it was necessary to cross it to reach the main road which led first to Glasbury and then to Hay-on-Wye in one direction, and to the roads to Talgarth (where her mother and younger siblings were living) and to Brecon (where *Miscellaneous Poems* was printed) in the other: that is, to the people and places who were most important to her in the world outside.

When Williams was living in Pipton Cottage in the 1820s the river Llynfi divided into two streams before it reached the nearest point to the cottage; these streams flowed either side of a small 'island' before merging into one river-course again. At that time there was no bridge over the river - the streams - at that point, so that travellers used a ford to cross from one bank to the other. However, the banks on either side of the streams are several metres higher than the river,[xxxix] and even when winter storms and 'whirlwinds' caused the river to 'rave as boisterous as the deep',[xl] the sheer volume of the water and the strength of the current - noticeable today even in summer - would have made the fords across the Llynfi impassable.[xli] This, in turn, means that when the river was as Williams describes it in the third and fourth stanzas of the poem, the occupants of Pipton Cottage would have been cut off from the main road which led to Glasbury and its social contacts, to Williams's family in Talgarth, and to the rest of the world in general. In a literary context her situation could be presented to readers as elegant retirement to 'the fair sequester'd vale'; in real life she was, in effect, marooned.[xlii]

In its raging, violent wintry state, therefore, the Llynfi created a physical barrier between Williams and the rest of the world and thus dramatized the gulf between the life she had taken for granted before her family's catastrophic loss of money and the life that she now had to lead at Pipton Cottage. The physical isolation which the high water and strong current of the river imposed on her mirrored her social, literary and intellectual isolation, and there was no realistic prospect of a change in her circumstances. It is notable that although the poem specifically associates the violence of the river with winter, it contains no implication that the year will turn, that season will follow season and that the calm orderly flow of the river will return. Indeed, the description in the poem's last two lines of "the peaceful form of happiness" being "burie[d] in its dread abyss' suggests that there is no hope of change, and that 'grief' will exert "its wild, its terrible control" for ever; the image is one of near-complete despair.[xliii] The absence of any hope is reinforced by the change in the rhyme-scheme of the last stanza: whereas the lines of the first three quatrains rhyme alternately, the last stanza uses rhyming couplets - a change in rhyme-scheme traditionally used to indicate finality.

Certainly a river's wild waters were a favoured subject for poets and artists of this period, and the wilder the better; a traveller in North Wales in 1800, for example, after describing the river Glynn near Cerrig-y-Druddion as a "hoarse-sounding" and "maddened torrent" which "roar[ed]" over rocks and "lash[ed]" its banks with its "angry waters", praised the scene as "truly sublime".[xliv] While the vocabulary used in the third and fourth stanzas of 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey' carries similar denotations and connotations of violence, it also relates to loss and death in a way that the traveller's description does not (certainly "raging", "roughly", "rave", "boisterous" and "wild", but also "grief", "terrible", "buries" and "dread"), and the poem's choice of vocabulary uses the river as a symbol of emotional pain.[xlv]

Both the Welsh places in these poems are used as the occasion for a meditation on loss and mutability. In 'Gwernyfed Hall' the natural world is benign (the “soft beams” of the moon

“gleam” with “soft light” and “a brighter lustre”) while Gwernyfed Hall itself, the work of human hands, is “dark and grey” because all the happiness and conviviality of the people who had lived there ("the laugh of mirthful cheer…the jovial song…the joy-inspiring strain”) is in the past.[xlvi] In “Lines on the banks of the Llunvey”, however, nature itself proves deceptive; the river’s “crystal stream” and “bright currents” of its “sweetly-flowing waters” can “rave as boisterous as the deep”, and the “wintry winds” which effect this change are compared to the way in which “grief[’s] terrible control” “buries…the peaceful form of happiness”.[xlvii] Certainly the tropes of mourning for the past and its lost happiness, and the use of features of a landscape to do this, can be firmly located in the traditions of mid-to late-eighteenth-century English poetry, but there are also particularly Welsh resonances in Williams’s use of them here. Rivers, of course, had been used to represent national identity in both national literatures for centuries (for example, Spenser’s use of the Thames in 'Prothalamium' and Milton’s use of the Severn in 'Comus'), and as inescapable features of the landscape they were frequently important as boundaries. Philip Schwyzer has pointed out that the Severn had traditionally been regarded as the boundary between Wales and England appointed by Brutus, but that by the early seventeenth century the true border had shifted westward to the Wye, so that the river itself became an image of loss.[xlviii] In Williams’s case, both the Wye and the Llynfi acted as literal as well as metaphorical boundaries. In writing the poem, Williams had brought together a feature of the surrounding landscape which affected her daily life with the traditions of two national literatures and traditional tropes of loss and mutability to create a poem which reflected the emotional impact of the ways in which her life had changed in the previous years.

'Gwernyfed Hall' also uses a trope much favoured by mid-and late-eighteenth-century English poetry - the loss of a happier past - and is especially associated with Gray, as suggested earlier. Williams had moved to live in an area of Wales surrounded by ruined reminders of

the past: castles in various states of dilapidation (at Boughrood, Bronllys, Llanigon, Pengenffordd) and a number of cairns, tumuli, standing stones and barrows, which could all have provided suitable subjects for poetry in the 'graveyard melancholy' mode. Gwernyfed Hall, however, was the only reminder of past glories, and the river Llynfi the only feature of the Welsh landscape in which she lived, which moved her to poetry.

The 'Welsh history' poem

The third of the Welsh-related poems, and the one which can most productively be considered in connection with Williams's positioning of herself in relation to Wales and Welsh identity, is 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation for the Death of the last Llewellyn [sic] Prince of Wales'. Since the order of poems in the collection apparently bears no relation to their date of composition its position as the final poem in the book cannot be taken to indicate that it was written later than any other but, for the reasons adduced in Chapter I, it is reasonable to assume that it was written after Williams's move to Wales. In contrast with the technical competence with which she handled the variety of verse forms in the rest of the collection, 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' presents a hotchpotch of metres and line-lengths (trochees and iambs, tetrameters and pentameters, rhyming couplets and 'abab' quatrains) and requires normally-unstressed syllables to be stressed to fulfil the demands of a line's stress-pattern (for example, "My Warriors brave, the Sovereign cries./Within yon town we have all*ies*" (emphasis added).[xlix] These technical lapses are uncharacteristic of the collection as a whole, and may indicate that the poem was written closer to the time of the book's printing, with fewer opportunities for redrafting and revising. When she wrote 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation', however, Williams was certainly familiar with Gray's 'The Bard' (1757), which had become famous and influential not merely in Britain but across Europe and had inspired

many poets and artists. 'The Bard' was by far the best-known history poem in English in thesecond half of the eighteenth century, and is likely to have provided Williams with a model for her approach to the subject of 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' as well as the subject itself.

One of the poem's most notable features lies in the fact that its choice of vocabulary carries far greater emotional force than that of the other poems in the collection. The vocabulary of 'Revenge' offers the closest point of comparison, in the section which uses examples of revenge in medieval history ("iron hand", "cruel threat and empty boast", "the crimson flood…drench'd [the land] with blood"),[l] but 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' presents the stark choice between "yielding blood and life" or living in "wretched slavery", and includes a far higher level of personal abuse: "the *ruffians* who would bring us slavery", "*Black infamy and lasting shame*,/Will rest on Mortimer's *detested* name" (emphasis added throughout).[li] By far the most important difference between the two poems, however, is that the standpoint of 'Revenge' requires the reader to condemn violence, but in 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' the reader is placed unequivocally on the side of those who approve of it.

Further, whereas the places where action takes place in 'Revenge' are either ignored or made non-specific ("Britain's fair fields", "Scotland's flow'ring heath"), 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' is located in a specific part of Wales: "The towers of Builth appear in sight,/Our enemies possess the height",[lii] and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd addresses his soldiers within sight of it ("yon town").[liii] In the light of its function in the poem, the history of the town of Builth takes on an ironic significance; an eleventh-century motte-and-bailey built to guard the crossing of the Wye was destroyed by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1260, and was later rebuilt by Edward I on the pattern of his other castles after his conquest in Wales.[liv] As an example of part of the fabric of Wales which was lost or destroyed by the Welsh and later appropriated and remade by the English for their own purposes, it fits perfectly into the pattern identified

by Schwyzer in the legend of Ysgolan in the twelfth-century Black Book of Carmarthen: a Welshman who destroyed all the important and historic Welsh books, thus ensuring that the Welsh past was, and would forever remain, irrecoverable, and creating a gap which facilitated English appropriation of British identity.[lv]

In contrast to the 'Welsh poems' of Felicia Hemans which stressed Welsh resistance to external threat rather than inevitable defeat,[lvi] Williams's poem shows the moment when the war was lost - the before, during and after of the historical turning-point - and this immediacy adds to the agonised sense of 'if only things could have been different' in a way very different from 'The Bard', where the irrevocable conquest is a given fact. In contrast to the moral victory which Gray's Bard gains over Edward I by the power of his curse and his defiant determination to wrest from his conquerors the decision as to how, when and where he will die - what Katie Trumpener has called a "survival in destruction"[lvii] - Williams's bard ends in mourning and deep despair at the irrecoverable national loss:

> Thy day of glory hapless land is o'er,
> Freedom, will smile on Cambria no more.
> Hushed be the note of joy, the lively strain,
> Our king is fall'n, our prince, our father slain.
> Oh! Cambria mourn, dear hapless country mourn,
> Our prince is dead, our liberty is gone.
> Join all ye mountains, and ye streamlets too,
> As still your circling courses you pursue.
> Oh! mourn with me, but mourn alas in vain,
> Our country's freedom gone, our hero slain.
>
> (Jane Williams 1824, p. 37)

Until these last twelve lines, the dogged determination of 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' to wrestle historical detail into verse results in failure to reach the lofty tone of tragedy which Gray had achieved; only in this final section – the 'lamentation' proper – does the poem approach the emotional weight it aims at.

Like Gray, Williams uses "Cambria" to refer to the poem's setting; this is Wales as a literary entity, safely distanced from the industrial Wales of the 1820s and elevated to literary and antiquarian status by use of its Latin name. Llywelyn ap Gruffudd has the nobility of a hero of antiquity ("the brave, the great, the good Llewellyn"),[lviii] a hero whose only weakness is the tragic flaw of trusting a treacherous friend who betrays him for money, and whose name (Mortimer) immediately identifies him as an Anglo-Norman outsider and potential enemy. (Given Williams's strong religious beliefs, demonstrated elsewhere in the collection, it is possible to see Llywelyn ap Gruffudd as a Christ-like figure: noble, courageous, acting for a cause greater than himself, but betrayed for money by one he trusted.) The form of the lament itself, while entirely conventional in its component parts (the nation is urged to mourn its loss and the land itself to join in the lamentation) nevertheless communicates a powerful sense of loss; there is no hope that "the note of joy" will ever return, or that the lost freedom will ever be regained.

In contrast to the solitariness which characterises many speakers and subjects of the other poems, 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' makes effective use of first person plural pronouns, a use particularly notable because it contrasts strongly with the way in which Gray's Bard uses the first person singular. For Williams's Bard, "Freedom [is] *our* treasure, *our* delight", and "*our* enemies possess the height" which "*we*" must attack; in his address to his troops, Llywelyn uses the same pronouns of solidarity: "*we* have allies", "The ruffians who would bring *us* slavery", and "*our* happy shore" (emphasis added throughout).[lix] In the final section of the poem the bard speaks to and for the whole nation of "hapless" Cambria,

and the last seven lines of the poem contain seven repetitions of “our” (modifying “king”, “prince” twice, “father”, “liberty”, “country” and “hero”), their use made even more prominent by their being grouped together (in lines 46, 4 and, 52); the loss of national freedom is a collective loss.

Philip Schwyzer has analysed the ways in which a profound sense of loss, and the awareness of a past freedom which had been stolen, formed part of the historical construction of Welsh identity from a very early period.[lx] It could be argued that Williams is here tapping into this national awareness of loss; certainly the strongly-charged lines quoted above suggest a very strong emotional involvement, and indicate that Williams’s readings in Welsh history had given her a new perspective on medieval British history; one from a specifically Welsh viewpoint.

Conclusion

The three 'Welsh' poems - 'Gwernyfed Hall', 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey' and 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' - suggest that Williams had discovered material in the landscape and history of Wales through which she could express feelings which more directly autobiographical poems such as 'Sink not, my soul' did not permit. The "act of migration" (in Paul White's words quoted in Chapter I) which circumstances had forced on her would, as he suggests, have led to the "calling into question of many of those aspects of identity that made up [her] personality and psychological self-image"; at the same time, the knowledge that the language, landscape and history of Wales were part of her personal heritage (because of the "Welsh descent" she declared to the trustees of the Royal Literary Fund) can only have heightened her sense of the "condition of inbetween-ness" which Dawson and Johnson identified as a result of "an act of migration" (discussed in Chapter I).

Williams's appropriation of parts of the Welsh landscape and history for her own literary and psychological purposes enabled the creation of a new identity, both as a writer and as someone for whom Welshness could become a significant component of her "psychological self-image". By publishing *Miscellaneous Poems* she had publicly and incontestably made herself into a writer; the way in which she positioned herself in relation to Wales in some of the poems in the collection began a much longer and much more complex and far more equivocal process which will be traced in the following chapters. It is clear, however, that by the time she published *Miscellaneous Poems* the process of her engagement with Welsh identity had begun.

Notes

i Jane Williams, *The Origin, Rise and Progress of the Paper People* (London: Grant and Griffith, 1856), I, p. 4

ii The parish registers for Glasbury show the baptism of seven children of James and Mary Anne Morgan, 1823-38.

iii Greene Family Archive (Powys County Archives, M/X/24/23 and M/X/24/24).

iv R. S. Neale, *Class and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London; Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 19.

v Tim Cresswell, *Place: a short introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 7.

vi Ibid, p. 24.

vii Personal observation (06/11/10) and comparison of the site with Cassini Historical Maps, Old Series 1831-1833, no. 161.

viii Ibid.

ix See the Will of Henry Williams of Ysgafell (Ch. I, note xliii).

x Cresswell, pp. 4-5.

xi Sarah Prescott, *Women, Authorship and Literary Culture, 1690-1740* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 125, 129.

xii Andrew Ashfield, ed., *Romantic Women Poets 1770-1838*, Vol. I (Manchester:

Manchester University Press, rev. 1977), pp. xvi-xvii.

xiii Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1983), pp. 8, 28.

xiv Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith, *Poems*, ed. by Roger Lonsdale (London; Harlow: Longman, 1969), pp. 80, 119.

xv Jane Williams (1824), pp. 26, 28-29.

xvi See John Sitter, *Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1982), especially pp. 68, 95, 109, 131, 164, and the discussion of Gray's 'Elegy written in a country churchyard', pp. 98-104.

xvii Jane Williams (1824), pp. 28-29.

xviii Ibid, pp. 33-34.

xix Ibid, p. 27.

xx Thomas Gray and others, pp. 119, 132, 9; Jane Williams (1824), pp. 20-24, 17.

xxi Sarah Prescott has pointed out that Evan Evans's 'A Paraphrase of the 137th Psalm, Alluding to the Captivity and Treatment of the Welsh Bards by King Edward I' (published posthumously in 1862) also makes a - very deliberate - use of the phrase "yon ivy-mantled tower": Sarah Prescott, *Eighteenth-Century Writing from Wales: Bards and Britons* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), p. 81.

xxii Jane Williams (1824), pp. 31-32.

xxiii *O. E. D.*, Vol. XVI (1989 edn), p. 40.

xxiv Jane Williams (1824), pp. 31-32.

xxv Jane Williams (1856), p. 15.

xxvi Jane Williams (1824), pp. 31-32.

xxvii Cresswell, p. 15.

xxviii Ibid, p. 78.

xxix See *The Correspondence of Thomas Percy and Evan Evans*, Vol. V of *The Percy Letters*, ed. by Aneirin Lewis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957).

xxx *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse*, ed. by Thomas Parry (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, repr. 1987), pp. 184-5. The ruins are at Gwernyclepa, Basaleg, Monmouthshire; see Geraint H. Jenkins, *Bard of Liberty: the Political Radicalisation of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 12.

xxxi See, for example, Vaughan's 'To the River Isca', Dyer's 'Grongar Hill', Pope's 'Windsor Forest', Wordsworth's 'Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey', Jane Cave's 'Thoughts which occurred to the Author at Llanwrtid, in Breconshire, in Walking from Dol-y-Coed House to the Well', Eliza Knipe's 'On the Lake of Windermere', and 'Keswick', Amelia Hope's 'Sonnet composed on the banks of the Ullswater', Charlotte Smith's 'Beachy Head', Ann Julia Hatton's 'Swansea Bay', Felicia Hemans's 'The Vale of Clwyd' and 'The Rock of Cader Idris'.

xxxii 'Gwernyfed' (alder-grove of the field') derives from **Gwern-y-field*, in which the last (English) syllable was cymricised when the stress shifted to the penultimate syllable; 'Llunvey/Llynfi', a variant of *llyfn + i*, translates as 'smooth river': Hywel Wyn Owen and Richard Morgan, *Dictionary of Welsh Place-Names* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2008), pp. 181-82, 298.

xxxiii White, pp. 2-3.

xxxiv This section is based on David Leitch, 'The Cipher at Old Gwernyfed', *Brycheiniog* XVII (1976-77), p. 88.

xxxv Jane Williams (1824), pp. 33-34.

xxxvi Mrs M. L. Dawson, 'Notes on the History of Glasbury', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* XVIII (sixth series, 1918), pp. 301, 304.

xxxvii Jane Williams (1824), pp. 33-34.

xxxviii As late as 1964 the unfortunate history (*hanes digon chwithig*) of Sir David's descendants was still remembered in the area: Alun Llywelyn-Williams, *Crwydro Brycheiniog* (Llandybïe: Llyfrau'r Dryw, 1964), p. 73.

xxxix The difference in height is shown by the fact that the deck of the modern bridge, which carries the road, is at the same height as the banks on each side - several metres above the water (personal observation, 10/11/10).

xl Jane Williams (1824), pp. 16-17.

xli Personal observation, 05/06/10.

xlii Jane Williams (1824), pp. 16-17.

xliii Ibid.

xliv Quoted in John Barrell, *Edward Pugh of Ruthin 1763-1813 'A Native Artist'* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), p. 113.

xlv Jane Williams (1824), pp. 16-17.

xlvi Ibid, pp. 33-34.

xlvii Ibid, pp. 16-17.

xlviii Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 124.

xlix Jane Williams (1824), pp. 35-37.

l Ibid, pp. 5-10.

li Ibid, pp. 35-37.

lii Ibid, pp. 5-10.

liii Ibid, pp. 35-37.

liv *Gwyddoniadur Cymru*, p. 534.

lv Schwyzer, pp. 82-84.

lvi See, for example, 'The Harp of Wales', 'Druid Chorus on the Landing of the Romans', 'Taliesin's Prophecy', 'Owen Glyndwr's War-song', 'Caswallon's Triumph', 'The Mountain Fires', all in *A Selection of Welsh Melodies with Symphonies and accompaniments by John Parry and characteristic words by Mrs Hemans* (London: J. Power, 1822).

lvii Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: the Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 8.

lviii Jane Williams (1824), pp. 35-37.

lix Ibid.

lx Schwyzer, pp. 80-81, 91-92.

CHAPTER 3

Artegall and the patriotic imperative

As suggested in the previous chapter, Williams's first publication, *Miscellaneous Poems* in 1824, provides evidence of the beginning of the engagement with Welsh identity which, with many variations and oscillations, was a constant for the rest of her life. This chapter will examine her next important book, *Artegall*, published in 1848, which demonstrates a far deeper and more direct involvement with the contemporary construction of Welsh identity by her intervention in one of the most contentious debates in the Wales of the late 1840s: the Reports on the State of Education in Wales of 1846-47 (the so-called 'Blue Books'). In the two decades since the publication of *Miscellaneous Poems* Williams's life changed in momentous ways; she had two great strokes of luck which transformed both her current financial, social and cultural positions and her expectations for the future, and she made the most of the possibilities which they opened up for her. She had gained a degree of freedom which she could not have foreseen in the 1820s, however much she might have hoped for it; *Artegall* was a product of her new social, cultural and literary milieu.

Crossing (and re-crossing) social and cultural boundaries

The length of Williams's residence at Pipton Cottage is unknown; the Morgans continued to live there until at least 1838 (when their seventh child was baptised in Glasbury parish church), but nothing has survived to suggest how long Williams was there.[i] The next reference to her appears in the Will of Isabella Hughes of Aberllunvey House, Glasbury, which was made in 1841; Hughes not only owned estates near Denbigh and Llangollen as

well as in Glasbury, but had also inherited substantial holdings of government stock from her father, an affluent parson-squire with antiquarian interests.[ii] In her Will Hughes refers to Williams in terms which, in a contemporary context, indicate that Williams was working as a lady's companion; "my friend Miss Jane Williams now residing with me". Hughes's bequests suggest that Williams had been working for her for several years, that she expected Williams to continue to work for her in the foreseeable future, and that she sympathised with Williams's literary ambitions and wished to help her.

An appropriate legacy for a long-serving paid companion would have been her employer's clothes and the equivalent of a year's wages. Hughes left Williams not only her clothes but all her silver plate, all her books except those she had herself inherited from her father and - most life-changing of all for Williams - £100 per annum for life. In the early 1840s, £100 a year was enough for a single middle-class woman to live on as long as she avoided great extravagance; while only a small fraction of Hughes's fortune, it was enough to give Williams financial independence and release her from the necessity of spending the rest of her life working for other employers who might not have been so sympathetic and supportive.[iii] On Hughes's death in 1845, therefore, Williams did not need to look for a new position; she joined her mother and sisters in Talgarth, where they were now living in a house in the centre of the village, Neuadd Felen (later Neuadd Felin).[iv] During her time at Aberllunvey House Williams published two religious tracts; these, and Hughes's possible involvement in their composition and publication, are discussed in Chapter 9 and Appendices 1 and 2. By the time Hughes died in 1845, therefore, Williams's authorial career had moved into a different genre; she had also learned more Welsh and developed an interest in Welsh literature and Celtic history. At the same time, she had experienced the second stroke of luck which was to transform her life: she had met, and been taken up by, Augusta Hall.

Hall and the Llanover circle

Augusta Hall was already a major figure in social, cultural and political circles in south Wales and London. Her husband, Sir Benjamin Hall, was an M. P. and they spent part of each year at their London house, where Hall used their political and social connections with the metropolitan élite to raise the profile of Wales and Welsh culture, especially its music.[v] She was a major patron of the *eisteddfodau* organised by the Cymreigyddion in Abergavenny, and supported the Welsh Manuscripts Society. At the Cardiff Eisteddfod of 1834 she had won a prize for her essay on 'The Advantages resulting from the Preservation of the Welsh Language and National Costume of Wales' (published in 1836), and she also played a major part in codifying 'traditional' Welsh women's costume;[vi] she wore her own version of Welsh dress herself, most frequently at Llanover but also on special occasions in London, and not only required the female staff at Llanover to do the same but encouraged "the surrounding poor" to follow their example by giving them Christmas gifts of appropriately Welsh clothing.[vii] After inheriting the Llanover estate from her father she had had a new house built especially to accommodate large house-parties for the cultural, social and intellectual élite.[viii] Williams became a frequent visitor, not only making long stays at Llanover Court but also accompanying Hall on visits to London, where she met leading members of the metropolitan élite also.

Hall spread her social net widely, and her friends, visitors and members of her house-parties included relatives, scholars, writers and aristocrats with a wide range of interests.[ix] They included Lady Greenly (a close friend of Hall's mother), who learned Welsh and competed at the Abergavenny *eisteddfodau* as 'Llwydlaes'; the Welsh historian and Celtic scholar the Rev. Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc); Arthur James Johnes, a County Court judge (who wasappointed to this position through Hall's good offices, according to Maxwell Fraser), writer on the position of the Anglican Church in Wales and translator of the poetry of Dafydd

ap Gwilym; the poet the Rev. John Jones (Tegid), who argued for a new form of Welsh orthography; the historian Angharad Llwyd; Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar; Lady Charlotte Guest, who after learning Welsh with Tegid, translated the *Mabinogion*; the historian Henry Hallam; the composer Brinley Richards; the three Thomas brothers of Brecon (a sculptor, a sculptor and medallion carver, and an architect); Archdeacon John Williams of Cardigan; the novelist and reviewer Geraldine Jewsbury; the novelist and memoir-writer Sidney Owenson Lady Morgan; the explorer and Egyptologist Sir Gardner Wilkinson and his wife; and the poet and philologist D. Silvan Evans. Other frequent guests from outside Britain included Celtic scholars such as Baron Bunsen (who was also Prussian ambassador to the Court of St James and Hall's brother-in-law), Dr Carl Meyer and Professors Carl Lepsius and Schultz, and the Breton antiquarian, author, and folk-tale collector Villemarqué. Prys Morgan adds the name of the Celtic scholar Sir John Rhŷs to this list.[x] Maxwell Fraser suggests that the Llanover circle had two main phases, an earlier one which focused on the *eisteddfodau* in Abergavenny organised by the Cymreigyddion y Fenni from 1833 to 1854, which the Halls marked with large house-parties and fancy-dress balls, and a later phase composed of younger members as the stalwarts of the first phase became too old or ill to attend (or died). Taken together, the two phases of the circle included some of the most important literary and cultural figures in Wales and matters Welsh and Celtic for more than fifty years.

By becoming a member of the Llanover circle Williams therefore came into contact with people who were interested in the same subjects as she herself was but who were far more knowledgeable about them and who would discuss these subjects with her and suggest books she might read; membership of the Llanover circle gave her the opportunity to continue the education which had had to stop abruptly in her mid-teens because of her family's financial difficulties. A major additional advantage of Hall's friendship was Williams's access to the large and impressive library at Llanover Court;[xi] in the later 1840s, for example, the library

acquired the Iolo Morganwg manuscripts from his son, Taliesin Williams.[xii] The Halls employed librarians (in the mid-1840s this position was filled by Thomas Jeffrey Llewelyn Prichard, already well known as the author of *The Adventures and Vagaries of Twm Sion Cati* in 1828), and the library was a vital resource for Williams in a period before the public library lending system had been established and when access to other major libraries was difficult or impossible for a woman. Williams was very aware of how much she gained from her position as Hall's friend and protégée and, in spite of the heavy demands which Hall sometimes made on her time and energy, was correspondingly anxious not to fall out of favour. At the same time, Williams's letters show genuine admiration for the zeal with which Hall supported Welsh culture in Wales and raised its profile in London; the influence of Hall and the rest of the Llanover circle played a major part in the position she assumed in relation to Wales in her next book: *Artegall*, her response to the Reports on the State of Education in Wales of 1846-7.[xiii]

The context of 'Artegall'

The previous half-century had seen a high level of civil unrest in Wales; some incidents arose from local and particular grievances (strikes, demonstrations against wage cuts, the activities of secret organisations like the Scotch Cattle and the Daughters of Rebecca), but others had explicitly political roots: in the Merthyr Rising of 1831 the centre of the town was held for four days against the army and the militia in a rebellion which started as a protest against reductions and wages and went on to demand political unions and parliamentary reform, while the Newport Rising of 1839 was in support of the Charter, which demanded universal male suffrage and electoral and parliamentary reform. The Rising had been organised efficiently and in great secrecy, so that magistrates had been unable to build up any network

of informers, which was attributed by some commentators to the language barrier. After the Newport Rising the London *Morning Chronicle* commented that it was far easier to foment civil unrest "in a district where the lower orders speak almost universally a language unknown to the educated classes".[xiv]

The answer to this dangerous disaffection among the Welsh working class was clearly to teach its members views and values more acceptable to those who governed them, and an investigation of the current state of education in Wales was necessary before appropriate reforms could be made; William Williams, a Radical M. P. (for Coventry), who had 'risen' from a poor Welsh-speaking community in rural Cardiganshire to make a fortune in the cotton trade, and who attributed much of his success to his knowledge of English, was the ideal choice formally to request this inquiry. In his speech to the House of Commons he addressed the alarm which both the Merthyr and Newport Risings had aroused in those on authority, quoting an article which argued that "if the [Welsh] people had been acquainted with the English language [and] had proper instruction provided, instead of being as they now are, a prey to designing hypocrites with religion on their lips and wickedness in their hearts" the disaffection which had led to the Riots might never have developed.[xv] The political purposes of the Inquiry were made very clear.

The title page of the Reports of 1846-47 (often known in Wales as 'Y Llyfrau Gleision/The Blue Books') states clearly their focus and scope: "an Inquiry [was] to be made into the State of Education in the Principality of Wales, and especially into the means afforded to the Labouring Classes of acquiring a Knowledge of the English Language". For the purposes of the Inquiry, Wales was divided into three: R. R. W. Lingen reported on Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire and Pembrokeshire in Part I; J. C. Symons on Breconshire, Cardiganshire, Radnorshire and Monmouthshire in Part II; H. V. Johnson on 'North Wales' (i.e. the rest of the country) in Part III. Each Commissioner was provided with Welsh-speaking sssistants;

there were ten in all, of whom five were students at St. David's College, Lampeter, which prepared young men for the Anglican priesthood in Wales.

The Commissioners themselves were all English, all Anglicans, all lawyers, and all members of the upper middle class. That they knew nothing of Wales, education in Wales, Welsh society, history, language or literature was, at that period, considered to be an advantage since it was regarded as a guarantee of their objectivity.[xvi] The Memorandum of Guidance from Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, secretary to the Committee of Council on Education emphasised that the Commissioners were to be "men whose experience will enable them to examine the whole question with impartiality".[xvii] This impartiality was further indicated by the tabular and statistical form in which their data was presented, and the variety of English in which the Reports were written: the register appropriate for official documents, which included a high count of passive verbs, abstract nouns, and Latinate vocabulary in syntactically-complex sentences.[xviii] This impression of impartiality gave the Reports' conclusions - that with a few shining exceptions, Welsh schools and teachers were inadequate, and that the Welsh people were characteristically superstitious liars, cheats, and thieves who neglected their personal hygiene and were sexually promiscuous - a particular force, especially since the Commissioners frequently related these negative attributes to the prevalence of Nonconformity and the Welsh language.

The Commissioners' attention to that part of their brief which required them to report on "the means afforded to the Labouring Classes of acquiring a Knowledge of English" made their hostility to the Welsh language particularly important. Lingen considered that, for Welsh children, to "supercede" [sic] Welsh by English was "the most important part of their education"; Symons described "the evils of the Welsh language"; Johnson declared that "the limited resources of Welsh led to the degraded social and moral condition of the poorer classes in every county in North Wales".[xix] Taken together, the criticisms levelled at the

Welsh and their 'moral character', religious affiliation, literature and language constituted an open attack on Welsh national identity.

The Reports provoked outrage and a bitter sense of betrayal in Wales, and the eighteen months after their publication produced a large number of books and articles which argued fiercely against the Commissioners' preconceptions, methods and conclusions. The Reports became a burning issue for discussion in Welsh-language periodicals: for example, in *Y Diwygiwr*, *Y Dysgedydd*, *Yr Haul*, *Seren Gomer*; and *Y Traethodydd*.[xx] Books and pamphlets on the subject followed: in 1848, for example, Dean Cotton of Bangor published a pamphlet *Remarks upon the Report of Commissioners*, Owen Owen Roberts published English and Welsh versions of an open letter to Johnson on *Education in North Wales*, and Archdeacon John Williams of Cardigan gave a lecture on St. David's Day 1848, printed later that year as *Christian Patriotism*. In 1849 two more contributions to the debate appeared: Sir Thomas Phillips's *Wales: the Language, Social Conditions, Moral Character and Religious Opinions of the People considered in their relation to Education*, and the slightly more pithily titled *Facts, Figures and Statements in Illustration of the Dissent and Morality of Wales* by Evan Jones (Ieuan Gwynedd). The authors included some of the most respected figures in contemporary Welsh public life; given the Reports' criticisms of Non-conformity, the contributions of Dean Cotton and Archdeacon Williams were especially important, while Ieuan Gwynedd, a minister with the Independents who had acted as Symons's guide in Tredegar, was editor of the weekly newspaper *The Principality*, and Sir Thomas Phillips had been Mayor of Newport during the 1839 Rising. *Artegall*, published on March 22 1848, appeared when the hostility in Wales to the Reports was already high and rising, and when the Welsh reading public were likely to be acutely receptive to another counterblast to the Reports' conclusions.

Hall's role in the publication of 'Artegall'

Letters from Augusta Hall to the pamphlet's publisher, William Rees of Llandovery, show that she not only paid for the publication of *Artegall* but also did skilful public-relations work on its behalf.[xxi] The letters indicate that her initial intention was to print 1,000 copies of an expensive and high-quality book, 300 of which she planned to send to people of influence in London ("Ministers of State, noblemen, M. Ps reviewers and editors of newspapers", in her own words) to draw their attention to the inaccuracies and unfairness of the Reports' conclusions and to encourage them to support changes in government education policy in Wales. *Artegall* was to be published anonymously, and a personal letter from Hall recommending the book was to be enclosed with each copy; she was aware that hints that she was involved with the book's publication would give rise to rumours that she was the author, and that a book thought to be by the celebrated Lady Hall would create far more of a stir than the same book written by an author known only to her friends and family. After considerable urging from Rees she reluctantly agreed that a cheaper edition, using smaller type and lower-quality paper, should be produced for "the lower orders" and sold for 6d (she wanted to charge 6½d), and left the details of this cheaper edition to him on the grounds that he knew the market better. The 'deluxe' edition, however, received her close attention; she chose its font (small Pica), insisted that the lettering on the title page should be "as dark as possible", and demanded that its cover should be not only blue (in reference to the Blue Books) but simultaneously "dark" and "remarkably brilliant"; unsurprisingly, she described this shade of blue as "something uncommon".

Hall greatly admired *Artegall*, precisely because it reflected her own views; she wrote to Rees " I would not have believed that so dry as well as so odious a subject with such a text Book [sic] as the [R]eports could have been treated in a manner which renders the perusal of these pages intensely interesting to the most indifferent observer", and its political significance as a

means of raising Welsh national consciousness was a large part of its importance for her; "it will be", she wrote, "fresh capital for the national cause". Certainly *Artegall*'s approach, arguments and choice of vocabulary make clear that it expresses Williams's own strongly-held views; equally, her writing was being used to further Hall's campaign to assert the distinctive character of Welsh society and to demand respect for its difference from that of England. In expressing her own views, Williams had the whole-hearted financial and psychological support of one of the most important figures in Welsh cultural life of the period (and presumably of the Llanover circle as a whole). In contrast to her solitary work in writing and self-publishing *Miscellaneous Poems*, in the production of *Artegall* she was not alone.

Artegall's title and purpose

Artegall seems to have been an example of the happy coincidence of the interests of the writer with the interests of her enabling patron. Certainly, *Artegall* is very clearly the product of an individual mind and experience. Its title, for example, is revealingly idiosyncratic; other responses to the Reports (for examples, those by Sir Thomas Phillips and Ieuan Gwynedd mentioned earlier) bear titles clearly descriptive of their contents; by their side, *Artegall* is positively arcane. Far from impressing prospective readers with its immediate relevance to one of the most hotly-debated public topics of the day, its use of the name of one of the less prominent characters in one of the less prominent books of an allegorical poem written nearly 300 years earlier suggests the extent to which Williams's literary tastes were informed by her reading of eighteenth-century writers and their models. David Fairer has observed that interest in pre-1660 English writers had increased from the 1740s onwards, and that by the 1760s these writers were seen as part of a continuing literary tradition: Spenser, as well as Chaucer, Milton and Dryden, was becoming part of the English literary canon.[xxii]

Fairer's account of the way in which many English poets moved from mere imitation to absorption of Spenser is important in relation to Williams's writing, since the poets he discusses in detail (Shenstone, Thomson and Gray) were among those she cited most frequently and who figured most prominently in her reading and literary influences. Fairer's persuasive analysis of the way in which Shenstone moved from mock-imitation of Spenser to the way in which he "exploited the descriptive qualities for which Spenser was particularly admired" is particularly apposite, since Shenstone was the only poet of whose style and subjects Williams had attempted an 'Imitation' in *Miscellaneous Poems*, as discussed in Chapter 2. Spenser is explicitly named in *Artegall* as an English poet who had used literary figures "with great success", and the other writers whom she mentions as models in their use of English (Dryden, Gray, Pope and Johnson) show his influence.[xxiii]

For Williams's writing to be influenced by Spenser is one thing; for her to choose a relatively little-known character from *The Faerie Queene* is another.[xxiv] Her choice of Artegall for her book's title speaks to a readership familiar with the English literary canon, to whom it would indicate that the author shared their educational, literary and cultural background, and who therefore could be assumed to share their perspective and assumptions. The title's relevance is explained by the quotation at the bottom of the pamphlet's title page:

> Then take the right likewise, said Artegall,
> And counterpoise the same with so much wrong.
>
> (*The Faerie Queene* 5, ii, 46)

This makes explicit the moral terms in which Williams saw her attack on the Reports - "the right" and "wrong" are absolutes which do not allow for the possibility of human error or misunderstanding - and thus prepares readers for the charges which the opening paragraphs of the pamphlet level against the Commissioners (also expressed in terms of moral absolutes).

The two lines of the quotation stand alone and do not require knowledge of their context to make their point. This is just as well, since their context - and, indeed, much of Book V of *The Faerie Queene* - would have been likely to confuse readers: although the knight Artegall is presented as the embodiment of Justice, he is defeated, captured, and fails in his mission.

The effect of the title and quotation is to make clear to the opinion-formers whose attention Hall wished to attract that the pamphlet was not a parochial and biased expression of resentment against the Reports by a local Welsh writer unable to appreciate the wider context of a government report, but the work of a well-educated and sophisticated author whose points of reference included the English literary canon (a message reinforced in the pamphlet itself by references to Dryden, Pope, Johnson and Gray).[xxv] Williams uses the pamphlet's title and quotation to mark out her difference from the authors of the other books and pamphlets attacking the Reports, all of whom wrote from an explicitly Welsh or Welsh-based standpoint and who could therefore be accused of bias by those who did not wish to accept their criticisms. By placing herself outside this explicitly Welsh group she could present herself as employing wider terms of reference than theirs, and therefore of giving a more 'balanced' view than the Reports' other detractors (as the use of 'counterpoise' in the title page's quotation makes clear). She could thus claim to be impartial in ways that they were not, constructing a position for herself as a knowledgeable observer, who could be trusted to weigh the evidence and come to the correct - as well as morally right - conclusions.

The Introduction to *Artegall* establishes its purpose clearly in its first two paragraphs:

> The Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales, have done the people of that country a double wrong. They have traduced their national character, and in so doing, they have threatened an infringement upon their manifest social rights, their dearest existing interests,

> comprised in their ordinary modes of worship and instruction, their local customs, and their mother tongue.
>
> The British public appear generally to have received the Commissioners' personal Reports as a judicial summing up of the Evidence they have adduced. Those Reports are, on the contrary, the partial inferences of advocates, the special pleadings of Counsel for the prosecution, in the cause Shuttleworth *versus* Wales.
>
> (Jane Williams (1848), p. 5)

The choice of vocabulary in these paragraphs makes clear Williams's view that the Reports had a moral dimension ("right", "wrong", "double wrong"), and that the "wrong" done to the Welsh people by the Commissioners was deliberate: the Reports were "the *partial* inferences of advocates, the *special pleadings* of Counsel for the prosecution" (emphasis added). The sentence following this extract, at the beginning of the third paragraph, suggests reasons for this deliberate injustice: "The Commissioners were sent forth with instructions to make a case, and they have diligently and faithfully laboured to accomplish it."

The task Williams set herself in writing *Artegall*, therefore, was not merely to demonstrate that the Commissioners had drawn inaccurate or misleading conclusions based on the 'facts' they had collected but that they had done this deliberately and at the behest of the British government (as represented by Kay-Shuttleworth) in order to achieve its aim of controlling educational provision in Wales - "*the direct and unprecedented interference* of the Executive Government in the regular management and inspection of Schools" (original emphasis).[xxvi] To further this objective the existing day-schools in Wales had to be declared "inefficient" and "worthless", even when the Commissioners themselves recorded evidence to the contrary.

Williams used a variety of arguments to discredit the Reports' conclusions; she argued that the Commissioners preferred the views of unreliable observers "and gave more credit to deponents whose ill will, inexperience, ignorance or prejudice rendered them incompetent, than to those of real weight and thorough knowledge",[xxvii] that the Commissioners' references to the Welsh language were highly prejudiced and ill-informed, and that the advantages to a Welsh child of knowing some English did not provide a reason for the obliteration of Welsh.

Some of her strongest points were made by analogy; when Symons criticised Welsh children for not replying immediately in fluent English when he made unannounced visits to schools and subjected the pupils to "exhaustive examinations", she observed caustically that similarly unscheduled visits to "English boarding schools to carry out examination upon all the various topics of instruction…in French" would produce equally uncertain and ungrammatical replies, and she compared the attempt to impose English on the Welsh with the Norman attempts to impose their language on "the depressed and despised Saxon" after the Norman Conquest, adding triumphantly: "They tried various means to effect it and they failed".[xxviii]

If *Artegall* had only pointed out the inaccuracies and prejudice which lay behind the Reports, it would have merely been one more protest among many others (Ieuan Gwynedd, in particular, pointed out the inaccuracy of many of the Commissioners' figures). Williams's pamphlet, however, demonstrates two additional characteristics which gave it an individual tone and approach. The first is the unashamed vigour of her criticism of the Reports; she wrote that the evidence of one witness was "disgusting", and that items of evidence from others were "so incompetent [that] they ought never to have obtained a place [even] in the Index". Her judgment on a passage by Symons in Part II which began "The Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales…" and ended "There is no Welsh literature worthy of the name" was a dismissive "This is such manifest tirade as scarcely to deserve a comment", and after quoting a long, vague and structurally-confused sentence by Lingen, she expressed the

sardonic hope that Kay-Shuttleworth "had a key to the cypher [sic]; to the uninitiated it reads very much like *nonsense*" (original emphasis). Another passage of the Report received the verdict "one of the most feeble in structure and indistinct in expression that ever reflected the form of a vague and cloudy thought".[xxix]

As these quotations demonstrate, she attacked not only the accuracy and fairness of the Commissioners' judgments but the ways in which they expressed them, and *Artegall* includes a section specifically directed at the language of the Reports, which follows the Conclusion and is headed 'Note to p. 21 - end of Chapter VI.'[xxx] Both the position of this Note and a reference in Hall's letters indicate that it was written as an after-thought to the main text; after several letters which refer to the pamphlet as a completed whole, another refers to "the grammatical note" as a separate entity. This Note begins by reminding readers of the Reports' conclusions on Welsh school-children's knowledge of English:

> The Commissioners repeatedly express their regret at the children's ignorance of the meanings of words and general unacquaintance with [English] grammar. They minutely record the slightest inaccuracy in the English phraseology of the school-teachers and mark it with contempt, while they apparently enjoy the petty triumphs of conscious skill in the use of their native language.
>
> (Jane Williams (1848), p. 40)

Williams then presents a linguistic analysis of the Reports which demonstrates the Commissioners' incompetence in "the use of their own native language", in relation both to grammar and their choice of vocabulary. She points out that while "an ordinary Report" need only demonstrate "grammatical precision", "an inquiry into the State of Education should certainly be reported in words and phrases which have been sanctioned by the use of good English authors". In her view, however, the Reports fail lamentably on both counts. On the first charge, the language is frequently so "ungrammatical" that "a set of exercises on

grammatical errors might indeed be compiled from the writings of the Commissioners, for the cautionary use of Welshmen studying the English language"; on the second, "it is scarcely possible to read even the few passages cited in the pages of this work from the Reports of the Commissioners without remarking the obvious faults of their literary style".[xxxi]

Both aspects of the Commissioners' linguistic shortcomings are measured against the precepts of recognised authorities (the eighteenth-century grammarian Lindley Murray and Dr. Johnson) and are set in a literary context (provided by quotations from the Welsh Triads, Pope's *Essay on Criticism* and his translation of the *Odyssey,* and by more general references to Spenser, Dryden and Gray). Her analysis is detailed and unsparing. Her list of the Commissioners' inaccuracies includes their "conspicuous and irreconcilable" lack of agreement between nouns and verbs, misuse of "the hypothetical particle *If*", failed attempts at antithesis, inappropriate neologisms and ambiguous reference of a pronoun to its antecedent noun, as well as the misuse of personification, the application to a district of an adjective properly used only of people, and a verb which requires a human subject used with an abstract noun.[xxxii] Many of the examples she subjects to particularly withering analysis are taken from Part II of the Reports, written by Symons, and her conclusions on his use of English suggest the response of a weary school-teacher to the work of a particularly recalcitrant pupil: "Until Commissioner Symons attains a more creditable knowledge of etymology and syntax, we would earnestly recommend him to abstain from the use of metaphors and from all figures of speech".[xxxiii]

The Note is one of the most clearly-focussed and effective sections of *Artegall*, and communicates a sense of its writer's enjoyment of her task of destructive criticism; not merely were the Commissioners' conclusions inaccurate and unfair, but their written English was "execrably weak". However, its presence at the end of the main text (in the first edition), has the effect of weakening the final flourish of the (officially) last chapter: the Conclusion,

which ends by declaring that "*the direct and unprecedented interference* of the Executive Government, in the regular management and inspection of Schools, would still have demanded as it now imperatively does, Preventative Opposition from the watchful Friends of British Liberty".[xxxiv] At the beginning of the pamphlet (in its second paragraph, quoted earlier), she had expressed concern that "the British public" had been led to accept the Reports "as a judicial summing up of the Evidence"; in its final paragraph, after her detailed demolition of their conclusions, she appealed for action against the threat to "British Liberty" which she saw as the motive for the Inquiry. Her point was clear: education in Wales might be the battleground, but it was merely the opening skirmish in a campaign that could affect the whole of British life.

Hugh Hughes's cartoon

One of the most revealing responses to *Artegall* in Wales was a cartoon by Hugh Hughes in the series *Pictures for the Million[s] of Wales*, published later in 1848 when the pamphlet's author was known to be a Miss Jane Williams (although apparently nothing was known of her but her name).[xxxv] The cartoon 'Artegall' took its cue from the facts that the Commissioners had reported on education and that the tone of the pamphlet (especially in the Note on grammar and style which closed it) often suggested the response of a rather weary school-teacher to pupils who continually fail to get the point of a lesson; the cartoon shows the three Commissioners (wearing wigs as a reminder that they were barristers) as naughty boys bawling in anticipation of the whipping they are about to receive from the large and fearsome birch held by their teacher (Figure 1). It is accompanied by two texts, one in Welsh and one in English, and while both are approximately two hundred words long the Welsh text

is longer, partly because it was explicitly intended for monoglot Welsh readers who needed the significance of *Artegall* and the Blue Books explained to them, whereas the English text assumed that its readers were familiar with the content of the Blue Books and had at least heard of *Artegall* (Figure 2).

Both texts are written as monologues by Miss Jane Williams as she prepares to whip the Commissioners (who occasionally interject "Oh, please no, Miss, we'll never do it again"), but the tone of the Welsh text is notably harsher than the English. Whereas the English text keeps the English literary reference of Artegall, the Welsh title ('Y Fflangelliad', the whipping or scourging) emphasises the physical violence which the Commissioner-schoolboys are to suffer; whereas the English text has Miss Jane Williams saying "I am sorry to have to lay this rod to your bare backs, but you are such naughty boys that I must", the Welsh version has her threatening to flog them so hard and so long that the birch in her hand will be worn to a mere stump, and the insults in the Welsh version are considerably stronger: "There is no sense in your heads nor goodness in your hearts, you filthy wretches" (Nid oes dim synwyr yn eich pennau na daioni yn eich calonnau, y burguniaid bryntion). The Welsh text also has a coda which the English lacks; as punishment, two of the Commissioners are to be exiled for life to England or Radnorshire, while the third is sentenced to hard labour in Llangollen "to try (in vain) to learn Welsh" (i (ofer) geisio dysgu Cymraeg).

Both Welsh and English texts, however, demonstrate warm approval for *Artegall* and its writer; the Welsh version refers to her as "a patriotic lady" (boneddiges wlatgarol) for her defence of the Welsh people. This approval makes the way in which the cartoonist chose to depict her particularly interesting. Cartoonists at this period tended to use a fairly limited repertoire of stereotypes when representing women - the innocent young girl, the virago, the contented wife and mother, the grand lady, the old crone, etc. - and among them was the schoolmistress, typically shown as a thin, sour-faced creature who shared many visual

characteristics with the stereotype of the 'old maid' (since women teachers could not retain their jobs after marriage), who were thin-faced, flat-chested and graceless: a figure of fun, and certainly not someone to be taken seriously.

This presented Hugh Hughes with a problem, since the author of a detailed and methodical dissection of an official government report, whose analysis was both intellectually impressive and patriotic, could not be dismissed as a figure of fun. The cartoon Miss Jane Williams bears some traces of the stereotypical features of a school-mistress (the thin face and receding chin), but the hair-style, dress and body of a different stereotype, the sort of young woman who would typically be told not to worry her pretty head about government reports - and who also would not be taken seriously. Giving her a face to match her body would have failed to communicate her schoolmistress's role at a glance (and also, showing a nubile young woman about to birch three bare male backsides might have been regarded as unsuitable for a family readership); the lack of clarity in the image chosen to represent the author of *Artegall* results in an uneasy hybrid. A woman who wrote a detailed and effective critique of an official report did not fit any of the cartoonist's stereotypes and could not be described in the terms available to him; Hughes admired her pamphlet and fully supported her conclusions, but at another level he did not know what to do with her. There seems to be no record of Williams's reaction to the cartoon; for a woman already insecure about her education, social class, financial position and relation to Wales, seeing herself put before the Welsh public in a cartoon is likely to have been a daunting experience. While she had the support of Lady Llanover and the Llanover circle, *she* was the one whose caricatured image had been put before the wider public. At a period when, for many, a respectable woman remained decorously in the private sphere and did not venture into the rough-and tumble of polemical debate in the public arena, writing for publication transgressed important social rules; having her name bandied about, and her person caricatured, in connection with a public controversy

with political implications might at the very least raise doubts as to her respectability, and at worse do permanent damage to her reputation.

'Artegall' and Williams's relation to Wales

The 'Welsh' poems in *Miscellaneous Poems* demonstrated Williams's first awareness of the landscape and history of Wales as areas within which she could create a new identity for herself. *Artegall*, written more than two decades later, shows a shift in her relation to Wales. Its opening paragraphs establish a position of impartiality, declaring that since the Reports present only one side of the case, justice demands that the other side should be heard before a verdict is reached. Succeeding chapters support this by drawing attention to bias and inaccuracies in the evidence which the Commissioners had collected; but as the sequence of these examples continues, a different authorial position begins to emerge.

After pointing out that Symons ignores evidence that mining districts of Monmouthshire were peaceable and law-abiding and instead presents them as inhabited by violent, drunken political agitators, she remarks:

> It is obvious that the fearful statements of the Commissioner are not substantiated and borne out by the evidence he produces. The air of tranquil hope, which pervades most of the depositions, must be viewed in striking contrast with this agitated and apprehensive gesture of the panic-stricken stranger.
>
> (Jane Williams (1848), p. 18)

The decision to use "stranger" (with its connotations of "outsider", "foreigner", rather than, say, "visitor" or "observer") places the Commissioner outside the Welsh people and therefore, by implication, implies that he lacks the knowledge which would enable him to come to a

balanced judgment about them. The fact that Williams can comment with scorn and amusement at the Commissioner's apprehensions and misapprehensions implies that, unlike them, she is not a stranger to Wales and the Welsh people, and can be trusted to judge fairly because of her insider knowledge.

Much of the second, third and fourth chapters of *Artegall* are occupied by a demonstration of how the Commissioners' pejorative comments on Wales and the Welsh people are contradicted both by the Commissioners themselves and by the evidence they collected. From Chapter V (on "Character of the People"), however, a more personal stance becomes visible. From the beginning of the chapter Williams summarises or paraphrases comments by the Commissioners in a way which potentially elides the distinction between authorial comment and the Reports. Crucially, the authorial comment comes first; for example "[The Welsh] honour the Sabbath day. Lingen says 'when not in chapel the people are generally at their homes [on Sundays]' "; "They are personally neat and clean. [Lingen] says… 'I do not remember to have seen an adult in rags in a single Sunday School throughout the poorest districts' ".[xxxvi] This technique means that later in the chapter it is not always clear when Williams is expressing her own views and when she is paraphrasing the Commissioners, but there are some points at which it seems that she is drawing on her own personal knowledge: "The Welsh small farmer lives harder than the English labourer, and the Welsh labourer harder still; and Commissioner Lingen found pretty and intelligent children 'quite hearty and happy' who did not remember when they had last tasted meat".[xxxvii] Here she is using Lingen's comment to support her own views, which are drawn from her experience as someone acquainted with the living standards of Welsh farmers and labourers as well as English labourers and therefore able to set the Commissioner's remark against the contrary evidence of witnesses.

The first indication of clear authorial bias comes in the same chapter, when she quotes a letter by a Sunday school teacher sent in evidence to the Commissioners which Lingen had cited as an example of typical Welsh ignorance of English; Williams rewrites it in an elegant, even literary style. The original letter contains the following sentence:

> Our Creator make many of them [the Welsh] a people of strong abilities, and a possessors of various talents, but because their ignorance spend their time in poverty to get their living in slavery, as a pig and his snout in the ground, they get no advantage to make use of their abilities in defect of learning and knowledge.

In Williams's version (headed "A paraphrase of the Welsh Peasant's Letter"), this becomes:

> Our Creator has endowed them, as a people, with large capacities for learning, with strong diversified abilities, and with great energy and alacrity of spirit; but poverty, which obliges them to labour for their daily bread, bending their attention downward to the earth, and fixing it there, prevents the full exercise of their noble aspirations after the higher treasures of wisdom and learning.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1848, pp. 28-29)

The effect of her paraphrase is that readers are given no time to dwell on the grammatical and syntactical errors of the original or on its choice of vocabulary, which contemporary readers might well have found "low" or "disgusting" ("as a pig and its snout in the ground"); instead they are immediately presented with a version which makes clear the points in the original letter and which they would find far more culturally acceptable. She was almost literally acting as an interpreter for the Welsh Sunday school teacher to English readers.

Three times later in the same chapter she uses her personal knowledge and experience to contradict the Commissioners' judgment.[xxxviii] Firstly, Symons describes an incident in

Tregaron when he saw a woman "admit a sow into her cottage and close the door", and from this he infers that "the pigs and poultry form a usual part of the family", Williams writes that she had observed a similar event only once "in the course of more than 20 years' experience of the 'Moral and Physical Condition of the People' " (i.e. one of the subjects on which the Commissioners' official instructions required them to collect evidence) and explains the reason: "There was no back way to the premises, and the pigs were obliged to be taken across the kitchen to their sty". Secondly, Lingen's statement that in rural areas girls' "household duties of a material nature… are naturally picked up in the common routine of agricultural employment" receives a swift and dismissive put-down: "Any Welsh matron would readily inform him, that practical skill in domestic occupations was never yet 'picked up' in the fields." Thirdly, Symons's view that boys started work before girls, who had "more leisure" and could be "better spared" by their parents to go to school, elicits an equally scornful response: "[Symons] knew that to be the case in the mining districts, and assumed it to be so everywhere, though any cottager could have told him that the girls' home services become first available, that they have not 'more leisure' and cannot 'be better spared' ".

In each case, Williams presents herself as an authority on the customs and practices of Welsh rural life, derived from her "more than 20 years' experience", and on the acquaintance withWelsh "matrons" and "cottagers" which this has given her and which the Commissioners, as "strangers", do not have access to; "These gentlemen cannot realise the necessities of rustic life", she writes sternly. Her readers are invited to infer that she does.

Later in the same chapter she moves from a position of an observer who possesses detailed and accurate knowledge of the Welsh and their practices to a position of open sympathy with them, when she castigates Symons for "sneer[ing] at the poor mother who boasted of sending her four children [to school] in quarterly turn to give equal advantage to each".[xxxix] The sentence implies that she understands that poverty prevents all the children being sent to

school at the same time, while respecting "the poor mother" for her wish to do as much for them as her limited resources allow. Here, the denotation of "poor" is both literal (the mother has very little money) and attitudinal (Williams views her with sympathy and invites her readers to do the same); a neutral presentation of the mother's financial situation modulates into a sympathetic understanding of her motives, by which Williams positions herself firmly on the same side as the Welsh object of Symons's "sneer".

This position of knowledge about and understanding of the Welsh people and the way they and their communities work is shown even more clearly in a later chapter (VIII), when Williams is discussing their desire for education. After quoting several examples of this from the Reports, she writes:

> A Welsh teacher [quoted in the Reports] told his pupils that "not to faint" meant "not to be daunted, not to give up"; and Welsh children do indeed exhibit a practical illustration of such words. Through all weathers, in winter's cold and summer's heat, through rain and wind, hail and snow, and thunder and lightning, crossing flooded brooks and rivers, by an unrailed plank, through roads which the Commissioners compare to ditches, along the faintly marked *rhiw* of the dreary and steep mountain wastes, over precipitous cliffs, which the Commissioners consider would be "*Highly dangerous for English children"*, these ardent little creatures come, fearlessly and cheerfully, for miles to their schools.
>
> (Jane Williams (1848), p. 48; original emphasis)

The construction of the second sentence is particularly interesting. The sequence of adverbial phrases emphasises the difficulties of travel by its adjectives ("flooded", "unrailed", "dreary and steep", "precipitous", "dangerous"); the increasing length of the phrases themselves creates an impetus which carries the reader along as if travelling across the same difficult and dangerous terrain as the children to discover what the goal of this onward drive, in the main

clause which ends the sentence, will be. The final clause draws a sharp contrast between the children's attitude ("fearlessly and cheerfully") and the "dangerous" and "dreary" path they have taken to school, and invites the reader to understand that the strength of the children's desire for education enables them to rise above all problems in accessing it. The final word of the sentence, "schools", represents the end-goal of the sentence as well as of the children's journey. The use of *rhiw* is revealing; certainly the context makes its meaning clear, but there is no obvious reason why "slopes" or "[hill]sides" could not have been used in its place. Its appearance here serves as a reminder not only of the foreignness to English readers of the landscape through which the children walk (reinforced by the quotation from the Reports that these same routes would be "highly dangerous for English children"), but that the author knows enough about Wales and its language to use a Welsh geographical term with which these readers would have been unfamiliar; she is presenting herself as an interpreter of Wales, its customs and culture, to her English readers. The contrast between the emotive vocabulary of the second sentence, (reinforced by its structure, as discussed above) and the efficient, business-like approach of *Artegall*'s opening paragraphs is remarkable. From the beginning of Chapter V onwards, Williams has gradually moved from a position of ostensible objectivity, in which she invites her readers to judge impartially the evidence she puts before them, to a standpoint which makes it effectively impossible not to be on the side of the Welsh children whose journeys to school she so emotively describes. Williams's own position in relation to Wales and the Welsh people has been made transparent.

By Chapter IX (on 'Language) the final chapter before the Conclusion, all pretence of objectivity has vanished and her authorial comments throughout the chapter make no pretence of neutrality. It is in this chapter that she describes some of the Commissioners' comments as "monstrous tirade" and "nonsense" (quoted earlier), and declares that "Symons's reference to the antiquity of the language was at once misplaced and impolitic".[xl] Later in the

chapter she states as a fact that "The religious ministrations of foreigners are almost as offensive to the Cymry now, as they were in the days when usurping Gregory sent Augustine the charge 'The Bishops of the British churches, I confide wholly to thee' ".[xli] The first part of the sentence reminds her readers yet again that the English in Wales are "foreigners", while "usurping" implies that Pope Gregory had no authority to give the bishops of the Celtic church into anyone's charge. This sentence is also notable for the first occurrence of "the Cymry"; from this point on she uses this form when expressing her own views, reserving "the Welsh" for quotations and paraphrases of passages from the Reports. It may be that writing about the language in this chapter drew her to employ the Welsh form rather than the English, but in any case its use is consistent with the position she had arrived at by this point of *Artegall*: no longer the impartial and knowledgeable observer, but a participant in the debate who used her knowledge of Wales, the Welsh people and the Welsh language to argue on their behalf in "the cause of Shuttleworth *versus* Wales". The concluding chapter returns to a more neutral account of flaws in the reports' statistics and argument, and sets them in the British political context to urge opposition to the Government's plans for education, but by this time any appearance of impartiality has been lost.

One of the features which makes *Artegall* such an interesting piece of prose is exactly this tension between the ostensible, aimed-at objectivity and the undertow of partisanship which comes to the surface from Chapter V onwards. By the end of the pamphlet, Williams's position in relation to Wales has undergone a substantial shift from that in *Miscellaneous Poems*; she begins *Artegall* by consciously positioning herself as an impartial and knowledgeable observer who will act as a neutral interpreter of Wales to an English readership, and moves gradually to an emotional involvement with the country and its people which is obvious to a reader but seems not to have been so to her. Her years of living in Wales and learning its language and history, and the influence of Hall and the Llanover

circle, had together begun to move her from the psychological boundaries towards a close identification with the country and its people.

Conclusion

Artegall demonstrates very clearly Williams's position in relation to Wales when she wrote it, and the way in which that position had changed during the twenty-four years since the publication of *Miscellaneous Poems*. In seventeen of the twenty poems, her standpoint related to English history and the English literary canon, while the three 'Welsh' poems drew on the tropes and vocabulary of that canon to create a space in which she could express emotions which she could not expose - to others or herself - elsewhere. *Artegall* offers the first example of Williams's writing in which she deliberately presents herself as an interpreter of, and authoritative commentator on, Welsh people, history and literature for an English readership; to be a trustworthy interpreter she had to assume the position of an objective observer. This is the mode in which she begins *Artegall*, and it seems she regarded herself as maintaining that mode throughout the book. As this chapter has shown, however, a far more emotionally-engaged position emerges in the second half of the book, making clear the difficulty and instability inherent in her condition of 'inbetween-ness'. Chapter 1 argued that Williams located herself in a liminal position from where she could see behind the masks which the Welsh and English communities presented to each other; *Artegall* suggests that in her own case, behind the position on the boundary between the two communities, Williams's own personal identity was in a state of permanent oscillation between them.

Notes

i Glasbury Parish Register (1838).

ii PCC Wills PROB 11/2021.

iii In 1848-52 "a widow or other unmarried lady" could live on £100 p. a., employing a general maid for £11 a year; by 1878-82 the wages of a maid doing this work had risen to an average of £18-8-0 (John Burnett (ed.), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of working people from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), pp. 153, 162.

iv References to the house in Census Returns until the 1870s give its name as 'Neuadd Felen" (Yellow Hall), but later "Neuadd Felin" (Mill Hall) starts to appear in records, and remains in use to the present. The house is not close to Talgarth Mill (which in any case included living accommodation for the miller and his family), and the change of spelling may reflect social aspirations which saw "mill" as more imposing than "yellow" in this context. The pronunciation of the two adjectives is identical in the speech of the area.

v See Rachel Ley, *Arglwyddes Llanofer Gwenynen Gwent* (Caernarfon: Gwasg Gwynedd, 2001).

vi See Michael Freeman, 'Lady Llanover and the Welsh costume prints' in *National Library of Wales Journal*, Series 34, No. 2 (2007), pp. 235-250 and Celyn Gurden-Williams, 'Lady Llanover and the Creation of a Welsh Utopia' (PhD thesis, Cardiff, 2008), esp. pp. 41, 202, 213.

vii Margaret Mostyn, who worked at Llanover as a maid in 1861-2, commented sardonically in her diary that many of those queuing for their Christmas gifts "evidently…had not worn [their Welsh costume] since the last time they came for their clothing" (NLW MS 23511A, 20 December 1861).

viii Prys Morgan, G*wenynen Gwent* (Darlith yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Casnewydd,1988); Morgan describes the new house as being in "a romantic Tudor style" (arddull Duduraidd ramantus), p. 5.

ix This section is drawn from Maxwell Fraser, 'Lady Llanover and her circle', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1968, Part II), pp. 170-196.

x Prys Morgan (1988), p. 15.

xi Access to the library could be withheld if the researcher incurred Hall's displeasure; at one point she refused to allow the antiquarian and literary critic Thomas Stephens access to the Iolo Manuscripts because he was sceptical about some of Iolo's views and 'medieval' manuscripts (MS Tredegar (I) 1309; Letter to T. Wakeman, 8 December 1856. I am very grateful to Dr Marion Löffler for directing me to this reference.)

xii Tonn MSS 3.109A. I am very grateful to Professor Prys Morgan and Dr Sam Adams for directing me to this collection of letters.

xiii See Williams's letters in NLW MSS 26/9.

xiv Quoted in Ivor W. Wilks, *South Wales and the Rising of* 1839 (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 26.

xv *Hansard* (London: H. M. S. O., 1846), XXIV, p. 846.

xvi As with James Mill's approach to writing a history of British India without having been there or knowing any Indian languages: see Hans Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England 1780-1860* (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), p. 140.

xvii Frank Smith, *The Life and Work of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth* (Bath: Cedric Chivers, 1974 edn.,), pp. 202-3.

xviii See Gwyneth Tyson Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: the Perfect Instrument of Empire/Wales and Colonial Prejudice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998, re-issued 2011), esp. Ch. 4, for a more detailed discussion.

xix *Reports on the State of Education in Wales* (London: H.M.S.O., 1846-47), Part I, p. 7; Part II, p. 666; Part III, p. 63.

x Respectively: November 1847 and January 1848; April, July 1847 and May 1848; March 1847, and April, August, September 1848; January, March, July, October 1848; April, July 1847, January, April 1848, April 1849, July 1850.

xxi See Tonn MSS 3.109A.

xxii David Fairer and Christine Gerrard (eds.) *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; 2nd edn. 2004), esp. pp. 177-178, 181-2.

xxiii Jane Williams (1848), p. 42.

xxiv Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, in which Artegall's function is to embody Justice, is "traditionally the least popular of the books of the poem" (Andrew Hadfield, '*The Faerie Queene* Books IV-VII' , in Andrew Hadfield (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Spenser* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

xxv Jane Williams (1848), p. 62.

xxvi Ibid, p. 7.

xxvii Ibid, p. 57.

xxviii Ibid, pp. 40-41. The parts of Wales on which Symons reported had particular

significance for Williams: her father had been born and brought up in Radnorshire, she and her family lived in Breconshire, and the Halls lived in Monmouthshire. It would be interesting to know if these connections led to a personal animus against him.

xxix This Note was incorporated into Chapter VI as a (very lengthy) footnote in later editions.

xxx Jane Williams (1848), p. 43.

xxxi Ibid, p. 42.

xxxii Ibid, p. 43.

xxxiii Ibid, p. 62.

xxxiv See Prys Morgan, 'Pictures for the Millions of Wales 1848: the political cartoons of Hugh Hughes', in *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* Vol. I, (1995), pp. 65-80, for a full account of the series of cartoons.

xxxv Jane Williams (1848), p. 27.

xxxvi Ibid, p. 32.

xxxvii Ibid, pp. 28-29.

xxxviii Ibid, pp. 32-33.

xxxix Ibid, p. 34.

xl Ibid, p. 53.

xli Ibid, p. 52.

CHAPTER 4

The biography of Carnhuanawc and degrees of Welshness

Artegall had drawn favourable attention to Williams's writing in Wales; to the 99% of Welsh readers who had been unaware of her earlier published work, she had burst onto the Welsh literary and cultural scene as a new writer who defended the Welsh people and Welsh society from the unfair slurs of the remote English establishment; the lasting impression the book created on the Welsh reading public can be judged by the fact that fourteen years and three books later she was still identified on the title page of a new book as "Author of *Artegall*".[i] Her next two publications - *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price Carnhuanawc* (published in two volumes in 1854 and 1855) and *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis a Balaclava Nurse* (1857) - consolidated her reputation as a serious and respected writer on Welsh subjects. Hall's influence and patronage continued to be crucial to Williams's writing career, both in terms of her subjects and how she approached them, and in the social, cultural and literary life which made her writing possible. As a member of the Llanover circle Williams's intellectual horizons were immeasurably widened, and with Hall's direction and influence she became a 'writer in residence' at one of the most important centres of patriotic Welsh culture of the period. The transformation of Williams's life and prospects begun by the legacy from Isabella Hughes which gave financial independence was accelerated by her friendship with Hall, which developed further in the early 1850s; after the death of her mother in June 1851 Williams was able to spend more time with Hall, both at Llanover and in London, than had been possible before. If she had not met Hall she might never have written for publication after the 1830s, and if she had it is unlikely that she would have chosen the

same subjects to write about. The first part of this chapter will therefore explore this friendship and its effects on Williams's life, writing, literary career, and relation to Wales.

Hall's friendship and patronage

The date of their first meeting is unknown; a letter on Hall's behalf to the Royal Literary Fund in 1871 in support of Williams's application for financial help states that "Lady Llanover has known Miss Williams for more than twenty-five years",[ii] but Williams's biography of the Rev. Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc) includes a letter he wrote to her on May 13th 1840 in reply to one from her,[iii] and since it seems that she met Price and Hall at approximately the same time it is probable that Hall underestimated the length of their acquaintance and that the two women had in fact known each other for more than thirty years. Williams's 1840 letter to Carnhuanawc had evidently asked for information on subjects such as Druidism, whether Caractacus was the son of Cunobelin, and the construction of early medieval Irish round-houses, and demonstrates both the extent of her interest in Celtic history and the reading she had already done in this field (Carnhuanawc's reply makes it clear that her questions had been detailed and knowledgeable).

Hall's letters to William Rees on the publication of *Artegall,* referred to in the previous chapter, make it clear that Williams was staying at Llanover during the period the book was being proof-read and printed.[iv] The letters from Williams to her aunt (her mother's elder sister) which have survived from 1851 provide examples of the other practical ways in which Hall's patronage proved extremely useful to her as a writer; they record, for example, that Georg Sauerwein, whom she met through Hall, checked Classical Greek references in the British Museum Library for her when she was proof-reading her biography of Carnhuanawc, and that Baron Bunsen - Celtic scholar, Prussian Ambassador to the Court of St. James and

(most pertinently, in this connection) Hall's brother-in-law - borrowed books on her behalf from the London Library and also lent her his copy of "the Gaelic Ossian…believed to be the only one in London".[v]

As this acquaintance with Bunsen suggests, Williams's friendship with Hall enabled her to move in social circles which were not only wider but higher than those she would have encountered in Glasbury and Talgarth; her letters to her aunt describe social calls, dinners and parties (especially at the Halls' London house at 9 Great Stanhope Street) at which she met government ministers, ambassadors, and a selection of the British aristocracy from knights to dukes (as well as literary figures such as the novelist Bulwer Lytton, the poet Samuel Rogers and the mathematician Charles Babbage). Her letters constantly make clear that she knew she was not the social equal of many she met in this way, and often Hall treated her like a paid companion. Williams's letters describe an afternoon in London spent making social calls with Hall when her presence was required at some but not others (at Kensington Palace "I sat in the chariot while Lady Hall made a long visit to the Duchess of Inverness"), an occasion when she went to her room to rest but was bullied into agreeing to go for a walk with Hall, although "I told her I was just dead already", and an occasion when she was used to get rid of an unwelcome visitor ("Mrs Gwynne Holford was let in by mistake and I had to go and talk to her".[vi] On a train journey with Hall from Newport to London Williams had to sit in the least desirable seat (next to the window which let in "stray draughts of air") and suffer the consequences ("bad inflammation in both eyes" the following day, which made correcting proofs difficult).[vii] Although her anxiety not to cause any inconvenience which might make her a less welcome guest sometimes acted as a constraint (at a London soirée she attended without Hall she missed the opportunity to talk to "some literary people" she had been hoping to meet because she was unwilling to keep Hall's carriage waiting), there were also many advantages in being Hall's companion;[viii] she was taken to places which she would otherwise

have been unlikely to visit and which she greatly enjoyed: for example, art and photographic galleries, "the Panorama of Constantinople in Piccadilly", Drury Lane theatre in the Duchess of Bedford's box, and the British Museum to see the Elgin Marbles ("the finest things ever done by human hands").[ix] Her awareness of her position as a dependent meant that compliments she received from the Halls and their friends were a particularly welcome acknowledgement of her contribution to their society; she reports Sir Benjamin as saying after an evening at Llanover Court spent composing extempore verses "What excessively clever lines those were of Miss Williams last night!", fellow guests declaring that her review of an article by the Bishop of St David's was "too good for any newspaper", and Sidney Owen pronouncing that "I had talents enough for anything" (original emphasis).[x] Her letters show that she was accepted in the Llanover circle because of her intellectual interests and literary talent: she describes a conversation with Bunsen on "his great works on [ancient] Egypt and the Philosophy of History…on which I am to give him my opinion", and writes proudly that her reception by "very remarkable people [was] kind and flattering…all of [Hall's] guests, even the most illustrious, seem to think it is an honour to converse with me"…[they] all treat me as at least their equal and often as their superior.[xi] In spite of the respect she gained for her literary and intellectual achievements, however, she had a constant reminder of her social and financial inferiority and of the ingenuity and daily hard work required to prevent this from becoming inescapably obvious to the people she mixed with: the daily stratagems she needed to engage in to ensure she was appropriately dressed.

Williams: a permanent wardrobe problem

Her letters make clear, for example, that she had only three dresses (over-dresses, all black: two for day, one for evenings and special occasions), and that she could not afford to have enough blouses to wear under the over-dresses to allow for some to be in the wash or drying while she wore others; she needed two each day, one to wear with her day dress and the other

after changing for dinner. Instead of blouses, therefore, she used detachable cuffs and a 'dickey', which she had to sew into place before each wearing and unpick for washing afterwards; further, since this was a period before fast dyes, she had also to unpick and re-sew the bands of black velvet ribbon on the cuffs each time (see Figure 3). She was clearly very interested in fashion and her letters describe the clothes of her fashionable acquaintances in great detail, but the fact that she had to perform the daily drudgery of sewing and unpicking - she could not afford a maid - while surrounded by "all the splendid wardrobes of my associates" (who all had ladies' maids) - must have been a constant reminder both of her modest income and her need to keep up appearances.[xii] The letters, significantly, were written to her aunt, who knew her financial circumstances; Williams would not have wanted the duchesses, ambassadors and members of the political establishment whom she met through the Halls to have known the effort she put into presenting herself as a socially acceptable member of their circle of acquaintances. It is clear from her letters that Williams genuinely admired the energy with which Hall supported Welsh culture in Wales and raised its profile in London; it is also clear that she was aware she had a great deal to gain by keeping Hall's favour, and was anxious to avoid any behaviour which might call her place in the Llanover circle into question.

'The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price Carnhuanawc' and the books' subscribers

Hall's hand is in clear evidence behind Williams' next work, her two-volume *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price Carnhuanawc* (published in 1854 and 1855). Carnhuanawc died in 1848 without close relatives, and Hall seems to have taken upon herself the role of his literary executor, acquiring his papers and playing a (possibly decisive) part in the choice of his biographer. Archdeacon John Williams of Cardigan, the first choice,

withdrew on grounds of pressure of work; Williams then took his place.[xiii] Members of the Llanover circle were responsible for the book's illustrations: the bust of Carnhuanawc by the sculptor John Evan Thomas was photographed by permission of his brother William Meredith Thomas, who had acted as John Evans's assistant in his work on the bust; the photographs of the bust were taken and printed by Miss Berrington (Hall's niece) and Miss Waddington (Hall's cousin), and the book used sketches of places connected with Carnhuanawc made or copied by Hall herself, her daughter Mrs Herbert of Llanarth and her brother-in-law and sister-in-law Mr and Mrs Berrington.[xiv] The number and cost of the illustrations seems to have been at least partly responsible for the need to publish the volumes by subscription, and the list of subscribers, also, demonstrates the extent to which the book was produced under Hall's aegis. Seven hundred copies of the book were printed, 516 of which were bought by 494 subscribers. Overall the subscribers fall into three groups (which were not mutually exclusive): contacts and friends of Hall; contacts and friends of Williams; and members of the Welsh public who admired Carnhuanawc and his work.

Hall was a member of important aristocratic as well as literary networks, and her contacts were responsible for the fact that copies went to "Her Majesty's Library", Prince Albert,[xv] the Royal Library in Berlin, and a host of dignitaries (seven ambassadors, ten dukes and duchesses, a wide range of lower-ranking members of the British nobility, thirteen Members of Parliament and one Rear Admiral) as well as to writers and intellectuals with a particular interest in Welsh and Celtic studies: Baron Bunsen, the translator Lady Charlotte Guest, the historian Angharad Llwyd, the poet Gwallter Mechain, the satirist Brutus (David Owen), the poet and lexicographer D. Silvan Evans, and the antiquarian and literary critic Thomas Stephens. Williams's contacts consisted of family members (including her cousin Catherine Cobden, wife of Richard, the M. P. and advocate of free trade), old friends from her days in Glasbury and Talgarth, and an even older friend from London, while members of the Welsh

public included a "mechanic" from Ebbw Vale, a timber merchant from Brecon, an ironmonger from Nantyglo and a shoemaker from Crickhowell. In spite of this apparent breadth of appeal, however, it seems that at least half the subscribers, and possibly many more, were contacts of Hall and this, combined with the involvement of members of her family in the production of the illustrations and the fact that hers was apparently the decisive voice in the selection of Williams as editor and biographer, suggests that from planning to publication Carnhuanawc's *Literary Remains* was very much an Augusta Hall project.

On the border: writing for two national readerships

Carnhuanawc had been a distinctively Welsh figure; from relatively humble origins in the eyes of the literary world (his maternal grandfather had been a mason and stone-cutter) he had risen by dint of hard work, frugality, a passion for knowledge and intellectual ability, to become a respected scholar, writer and lecturer on Welsh and Celtic subjects. He had written much of his most important work - including his *magnum opus*, his history of Wales (*Hanes Cymru*, published in book form in 1842) - in Welsh, and was known, admired - and, indeed, loved - throughout Wales as a Welsh cultural patriot, unsparingly devoting his time, knowledge and enthusiasm to the service of his country. Writing about his life and work in English, therefore, could not help but draw attention to his essential non-Englishness; his biography offered an opportunity to establish him as a major Welsh cultural figure in the eyes of the large number of the book's subscribers who were important and influential members of the English and metropolitan élite. Arguing for the significance of his life and achievements in the context of the community from which he came and in which he worked to this English readership would in itself present something of a challenge; it was important to avoid leaving these readers with any sense that he had been a figure of merely local interest. Williams

therefore needed to make it clear to these readers that she was fully aware of current views on the nature and requirements of English biography, that Carnhuanawc was a fitting subject, and that the book fulfilled the criteria these readers were likely to apply to any biography.

At the same time, she also had to be aware of the number of Welsh subscribers, and their expectations that a biography of a distinctively Welsh cultural figure who had been greatly admired and loved would not only memorialise his intellectual and academic achievements but do justice to his ardent patriotism and his determination to develop the cultural resources of Wales and extend knowledge of them. There was a further element: Williams had known Carnhuanawc personally, and her biography shows her (sometimes amused) affection for him as well as her respect for his erudition, gratitude for his help in giving her information and sources, and admiration for the energy and eloquence with which he argued for the importance of the language, literature and history of Wales. Her biography needed to show itself sufficiently aware of the norms of English biography to meet the expectations of the English (and Prussian, Belgian, Danish, Dutch and Turkish) subscribers, and to avoid any suggestion that they were reading the parochial, old-fashioned *Life* of a parochial old-fashioned figure of purely local significance; at the same time it needed to meet the expectations of its Welsh readers as a biography worthy of a important figure who had achieved fame, respect and public affection within Welsh-speaking Wales. It needed to use both English and Welsh terms of reference: one of its most important elements needed to be what Dawson and Johnson, quoted in Chapter I, characterised as the quality of "both/and". I wish to argue that while Williams's biography of Carnhuanawc shows that she was aware of the norms of English biography of the period, it shows far more than mere awareness of the distinctively Welsh form of biography in the nineteenth century, the *cofiant*, and that the biography uses and adapts the traditions and structures of the *cofiant* for its own literary purposes.

Nineteenth-century English biography

Consensus on the standard of biography in English in the first half of the nineteenth century is notably lacking; one writer declared in 1970 that the previous "nearly two centuries" had been "a golden age of biographical writing", while to another it was "a golden age" for autobiography but not for biography.[xvi] There is, however, general agreement that the purpose and style of biographical writing in English underwent a significant change between the later part of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth. The eighteenth century had seen the growth of a public appetite for reading about the lives of the rich, famous, and infamous, regardless of what they had done to put themselves in the public eye; subjects were just as likely to be murderers, swindlers and courtesans as writers, military leaders and politician, and much of these biographical writings consisted of anecdotes (often spurious) which typified the subjects' nefarious, scandalous or heroic deeds. Early in the nineteenth century, however, there was a perceptible shift of attitude in the reading public and therefore in the approach of biographers and publishers aiming at large sales. Reed suggests that one significant factor was a series of technical improvements to the standard printing press - notably, the development of the Stanhope press (c. 1800) and subsequent improvements on it - which opened new possibilities of mass production and cheaper distribution of books. Biography was a good commercial prospect to satisfy the increased demand for reading material, since writing one required less time and effort than for a novel, and biography became much more popular as a genre. The number of biographies published in English during the first part of the nineteenth century attests to this increased popularity; there were 23 lives of Nelson and 25 of Napoleon, for example, and many others on writers (Voltaire, Goldsmith, Cowper, Akenside), politicians (Burke, Pitt the Elder), actors (Kean, Kemble, Mrs Siddons) and well-known historical figures (Cromwell, Erasmus, Henry V, Belisarius) as

well as the less well known (Mary Ann More, the 'fasting woman' of Tutbury; Charles Eulenstein, performer on the jew's harp; Rattenbury the smuggler; a wide range of eccentrics); there were also biographies of animals.[xvii]

During the same period, the increasingly powerful Evangelical movement created not only a greater demand for the biographies of well-known ministers and missionaries, but a more general focus on the exemplary purpose of biography. If, as Cockshut has suggested, the underlying purpose of nineteenth-century biography was to establish the heroism of its subjects in whatever form or field was appropriate, this became overt in biographies of religious figures; readers were exhorted to put the book aside and go and do likewise.[xviii] The reviewer of the biography of a minister of religion in 1834 declared that "memoirs and biographies…beget in the living a desire to merit posthumous respect and honour", and offered examples of how this could be done.[xix] Anecdotes could still be included, but with a very different purpose; rather than to amuse, titillate or reveal character, they were to teach a moral lesson. At its extreme this led to overt didacticism, since it was assumed that unsophisticated minds were unable to recognise vice or virtue without guidance; it also led to an emphasis on the subjects' deathbeds and last (always devout) words. This - and the interest in the collected sayings of the subjects - marked a widening of the biography's focus, from an account of their external lives (their actions and achievements) to a focus on their thoughts and feeling as revealed in their letters, sayings and private papers. (The inclusion of private thoughts and feelings, however, raised questions of privacy and 'public propriety' demonstrated, for example, in the furore which greeted the publication of Nelson's letters to Lady Hamilton in 1814; their relationship had been widely known for years, but publishing the letters made it an inescapable public fact).[xx]

The nineteenth century saw the work of writing a biography in English as having two aspects: what Macaulay in 1831 called the biographer's "labours" (collection, annotation and

transcription) and his or her creative work (planning, organisation, selection and design). Macaulay regarded only the former as important: in his view the biographer's task was "to set down what he sees in the most direct manner possible".[xxi] Williams's Preface indicates that while the collection and presentation of factual material provided the basis of her biography of Carnuhuanawc, she also had more ambitious aims:

> The various particulars of information comprised in the *Memoir* have been carefully drawn from the most original and authentic sources, and in every instance where comparative evidence could be obtained, it has been rigorously applied as a test to elicit truth. By interweaving the communications of correspondents and the minor compositions of Thomas Price, with the chronological record of events, that natural order has been as far as possible preserved unbroken which renders human life as an alternating stage of acts and pauses, and shows in due succession the outward course of conduct, and the inward tenor of thought. To this method of arrangement belongs also the advantage of relieving the stress of continuous attention, while it deepens the impression of each preceding series of facts upon its readers' memories.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1854, pp. ix-x)

Like much writing of the period, this assumes an absolute trust in "authentic sources", and that "the truth" exists and is accessible to those who approach the task of "elicit[ing]" it with the right tools. However, this paragraph also demonstrates awareness that the biographer's task is much less artless than merely setting down "true" facts about the subject that have been elicited from "authentic sources". Her description of "human life" as "an alternating stage of acts and pauses" reflects an understanding that the life of a subject is composed of more than a succession of important events, and that to focus only on these would give a false impression of the subject's life as lived and experienced (her assumption that Carnhuanawc's writings revealed his "inward tenor of thought" was a reasonable assumption in an age

unaware of the power of the unconscious). Her final sentence shows awareness of the need for variety of tone and material to maintain readers' interest throughout a full-length book.

The cofiant

If the Preface demonstrates an awareness of the requirements of English biography of the period, however, the biography itself shows both a detailed knowledge and a strong influence of the *cofiant*. Saunders Lewis, who made one of the most detailed studies of the genre, describes it as not only the most important form of creative prose in Welsh in the nineteenth century (as the *cywydd* had been in the fifteenth century and the hymn in the eighteenth), butas the only form of creative prose until the last quarter of the century (that is, until the novels of Daniel Owen).[xxii] Early *cofiannau* had shown the influence of English originals (for example, biographies of the preachers Vavasor Powell in the seventeenth century and Howel Harris in the eighteenth, and the *cofiannau* of imaginary characters by William Williams Pantycelyn, also in the eighteenth).[xxiii] From its inception, the *cofiant*'s function had been to memorialise the lives of religious figures (*cofio* translates as 'to remember'), and to provide a moral lesson for its readers by offering them a godly exemplar ("fel cyfrwng gwers foesol, a chynorthwyo'r Cymry i fyw bucheddau yr un mor dduwiol ag eiddo'u gwrthrychau eu hunain").[xxiv] By the middle of the nineteenth century it had become a distinctive genre, and Saunders Lewis has summarised its characteristic pattern as follows: a brief account of the main events of the subject's external life; his (subjects were typically male) conversion and religious career; his final days and death; a portrait of him as a Christian and minister; sermons preached at his funeral; his most notable sayings; an elegy or elegies.[xxv] Williams's biography of Carnhuanawc follows a roughly chronological line and therefore does not make the *cofiant's* distinction between her subject's external and spiritual lives. If, however,

Carnhuanawc's life is considered as offering an example not of religious devotion but of patriotism, her biography follows the typical structure of the *cofiant* in every other respect.

This is not to imply that the biography ignores Carnhuanawc's religious life. He was an Anglican vicar, and the book pays appropriate attention to his piety and good works, listing his charitable work among his parishioners and offering a character reference ("It is the uniform testimony of all who knew him from birth until his death that he was always good and always kind").[xxvi] It is rather that his exceptionality - and therefore the justification for his biography - lay in his patriotism and in the way in which he used his time and talents in the service of his country.

The events of Carnhuanawc's life can be briefly summarised; from a relatively poor, Welsh-speaking background he received a good education through his own and his family's financial sacrifices, became an Anglican clergyman, wrote essays and lectures on Welsh and Celtic history and literature, supported the translation of the Bible in Breton, argued for the importance of the Welsh language to the Welsh people, supported *eisteddfodau* and many other Welsh cultural organisations and died, much respected and admired, at the age of sixty-one.

The biography's equivalent to the *cofiant*'s religious conversion occurred in 1819, when Carnhuanawc applied for a living on the island of St. Vincent.[xxvii] He had become curate of three parishes in Breconshire which demanded much work for meagre remuneration (the absentee vicar kept most of the stipend and tithes); the parish in St. Vincent offered £1,400 per annum. His friends, anxious for his health, begged him not to go, and his elder brother (his only surviving relative), urged him "to stay at home and preach the gospel to his countrymen". Carnhuanawc ignored all such pleas and had sold his investments, bought his tropical outfit and packed his trunks before he discovered that "because of certain particulars

regarding the island currency" the nominal £1,400 "would really produce a net income scarcely amounting to even half that amount", and immediately decided not to go.

No mitigating circumstances are offered, and his decisions first to go and then not to go to St. Vincent have to be seen as entirely mercenary; certainly he was too old (thirty-two) for the episode to be presented as a mere folly of thoughtless youth. Williams presents it as the turning-point in his life: "The impression left on Mr Price's mind by this occurrence seems to have been that he had erred in permitting any considerations of worldly advantage to counter-balance his disinterested desire of devoting himself to the Welsh people".[xxviii] After this she shows him devoting his time to researching aspects of Welsh history and antiquities, and becoming involved in founding the Aberhonddu Cymdeithas Cymreigyddion (glossed as "Welsh Literary Society of Brecon") and the Welsh Minstrelsy Society until the death of his elder brother in 1825. At this point, "[t]he last close tie of family attachment having thus been dissevered, Mr Price became henceforth wholly the property of his country".[xxix] After this the biography shows him travelling widely, especially in the Celtic countries, to collect comparative material on their languages and histories, and developing a career as a writer and public speaker on Welsh and Celtic languages, literature, and history; that is, the biography describes his "conversion" to patriotism and then recounts his career as a patriot rather than as a preacher.

His public speaking on Welsh subjects (Williams includes his own notes for many of his lectures), especially at *eisteddfodau*, can be seen as taking the place of the sermons of the traditional subjects of *cofiannau*, and indeed used many of the same rhetorical devices - not surprisingly, since he was a minister of religion and came from a Welsh preaching tradition. The texts of his lectures show him skilfully developing both his arguments and the increasingly emotive language in which they were expressed, building *hwyl* to an effective climax; for example, after referring to the suggestion by English commentators that the

Welsh language should be "extirpated" (the word used in the 1536 Act of Union),[xxx] he asked rhetorically "If he who would destroy a light-house would be deemed a barbarian, what shall we say of the man who wishes to destroy a living language?" (lecture at the Welshpool Eisteddfod, 1824), while a speech at the Brecon Eisteddfod in 1826 welcomed the signs of "a patriotic fire which has long been cherished among us" and declared "I trust that as long as [our] mountains shall lift up their heads to the skies, this patriotic ardour of our nation will not cease to blaze as high as a bright and splendid beacon-fire".[xxxi]

The course of his life and (apparently) the nature of his personality meant that Williams did not need to consider the question which faced many contemporary biographers (for example, Southey on Nelson; Moore on Byron; Lockhart on Burns) as to whether to include embarrassing or scandalous incidents or relationships; there seem to have been none. Carnhuanawc's romantic life was apparently restricted to "an attachment which is said to have existed between Mr Price and a young lady of noble family" when he was in his twenties, made impossible by "disparity of rank and fortune".[xxxii] This passage occurs at the end of Chapter 5; by the middle of Chapter 9, all Carnhuanawc's close relatives were dead, and the biography could focus on his growing reputation as a scholar and public speaker.

Humorous elements in the biography

Williams apparently felt that her task of "relieving the stress of continuous attention" to the account of a scholarly and devout life by sufficient variety and interest could be accomplished by using humour.[xxxiii] The longest sustained example is provided by her inclusion of the letters from Lady Hester Stanhope to Carnhuanawc's father in 1808 and 1809.[xxxiv] Lady Hester rented houses in the Builth area for several months during these years, and seems to have treated Carnhuanawc's father as an unpaid agent-cum-upper servant; her

letters to him were among Carnhuanawc's papers to which Williams had access, and reveal Lady Hester as made in the mould of Lady Catherine de Burgh, issuing peremptory orders on the preparations to be made for her arrival (sending two sorts of green paint, as "good paint cannot be got in the country I know", and giving detailed instructions for its use and the management of the house-painters).[xxxv] Her letters are unconsciously very entertaining, and it is easy to see why Williams thought they deserved publication, although they are of only peripheral relevance to Carnhuanawc's life. Williams was clearly aware of this, admitting that their inclusion "may critically be deemed a superfluous redundancy" and offering the lame excuse that meeting Lady Hester "enlarged Mr Price's acquaintance with human nature".[xxxvi] In terms of the biography as a whole the letters provide an entertaining interlude, but an interlude which (taking up the whole of one chapter out of twenty-five) lasts far too long.

Examples of Williams's own humour in the biography are dry and understated, often dead-pan, and work by appearing unexpectedly in the middle of a serious passage of narrative. After a detailed and entirely serious recital of the pedigrees of Carnhuanawc's parents, Williams records that his paternal great-great-grandfather, "who lived to a good old age, was only renowned in memory for the maiden-like profusion and fineness of his hair".[xxxvii] There is no suggestion that this fact had any relevance to Carnhuanawc (or his hair); it seems to be offered as a momentary diversion from a list of worthy but unexciting ancestors.

Other examples are more closely tied to the main thread of the narrative and are used to illuminate aspects of Carnhuanawc's character. She records that as a boy he would often walk with a school-friend in the countryside near his home in Breconshire (Llanfihangel Bryn Pabuan) and that on one such occasion, "Standing on a high rock on the bank of the river Chwilfri, with a small spy-glass in his hand, he lamented audibly that he did not possess a telescope such as Sir Isaac Newton had used with which, instead of merely getting a view of Llandrindod, he could also have seen the planet Saturn".[xxxviii] The contrast between

Llandrindod and Saturn may be bathetic, but the difference is part of the point being made: physically Carnhuanawc could only see as far as Llandrindod, but his academic interests and intellectual ambition (which led him to talk of himself in the same breath as Newton) were so much greater than his situation in life that they could be described with humorous exaggeration as almost extra-terrestrial.

At times the humour, while still used to exemplify an aspect of his character, verges on the farcical. After Carnhuanawc became well known as a scholar and lecturer, "persons of trifling and superficial character" would sometimes call without warning at his rectory in Cwm du; since his study was at the back, when he "was disturbed by an unusual noise of wheels or voices" from the front of the house he would leave by the back door and "take refuge on the Briannog mountain before the besiegers had asked if he was at home", so that his housekeeper could say truthfully that he was out. "One or two of his very old and intimate friends, who knew the secret, used to amuse themselves occasionally by making an attack at the front door and then rushing round to catch the master of the house plunging from the back door to his sylvan retreat".[xxxix] The choice of mock-heroic vocabulary ("take refuge", "besiegers", "making an attack", "sylvan retreat") adds to the ridiculous picture of the distinguished man of letters sneaking out of the back door of his own house, while adding another brush-stroke to his portrait; he avoided the society of "trifling and superficial people", and valued and guarded his privacy and his time.

Carnhuanawc's death

If Carnhuanawc's life is to be taken as an example of patriotism in action, the account of his last days and death exactly fits the pattern of the *cofiant*.[xl] He attended the eisteddfod of the Cymreigyddion y Fenni at Abergavenny in October 1848 where the "mountain scenery" and

"pageantry of the Welsh procession…soothed [his] Cambrian feelings", although he was clearly unwell; in spite of his obvious weakness and "the deadly pallor of his complexion and the excessive brightness of his eyes" he lectured on both days of the eisteddfod (the subjects included "the influence of Welsh tradition upon European literature", "the bards of Wales in all ages" and "the national harp and the joy of its music") and returned home to the rectory at Cwm du in "a very exhausted state". Over the following fortnight he became weaker, but continued to fulfil his parochial duties as best he could. On 7th November, when invited to visit Llanover Hall he declined, telling the messengers that "they might as well take a corpse with them in the carriage as take me." After his housekeeper's daughter had taken his dinner to him, she went to the adjoining room, "sitting down there to her harp, as usual at his meal-times, and playing several times one of his favourite Welsh airs, 'Syr Harri Ddu' ". Some time later, when she had heard no sound from him she went to his room and found him in a coma; he died without regaining consciousness several hours later.

Williams does not comment explicitly on the circumstances of his death, apparently feeling that they speak for themselves, but the message is clear. Carnhuanawc had the perfect death for a Welsh patriot; to the end of his life he exerted - indeed, over-exerted - himself in the service of his country, he accepted his approaching death, and (most fitting of all) died listening to one of his favourite pieces of Welsh traditional music played on his favourite Welsh instrument. His last days and death could hardly be more exemplary, a point made explicit in the chapter on 'Testimonies to Carnhuanawc's Worth', where "the Duchess of……" [sic] comments that "there is something very poetic and quite in consonance with his life and sentiments in [his] having breathed his last to the sound of the harp he was so enthusiastic about".[xli]

Patriotic English biographies of the period

Reed has examined the way in which nineteenth-century biographies focused on "the importance and power of the individual…the Great Man syndrome", and quotes the comment in an 1808 review of Macdiarmid's *Lives of British Statesmen* that a biographical subject was most appropriately "an individual who was occupied with the destiny of nations".[xlii] Cockshut, in turn, argues that nineteenth-century biography demonstrated "an attempt to establish the heroism of the subject", in whatever form or field of endeavour that was revealed;[xliii] indeed, in *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic* (1841) Carlyle declared that "the history of the world is but the biography of great men".[xliv] Even if one allows that Carlyle's personal obsession with the Heroic made him a special case, the influence and popularity of his views shows the extent to which they chimed with the pre-existing tendency to look for greatness in biographical subjects, and the way in which these subjects were presented for the admiration of (and also, possibly, for emulation by) the widening readership of English-language biographies.

Biographies of Great British Men were therefore regarded as performing a valuable public service, describing to their readers the undisputed greatness of figures such as Nelson and Wellington (national saviours who defended Britain from the threat posed by Revolutionary France and Napoleon), Cromwell (who had saved 'England' from a despotic, arrogant and misguided tyrant who had, moreover, a French wife), and Shakespeare, Johnson and Scott (shown as possessing the English-language literary genius that was the envy of the civilised world). Patriotic English-language biographies of this period usually ended with their subjects' death and the immediate aftermath: Southey's *Life of Nelson*, for example, ends with the return of Nelson's body to Britain and the admiration of his grieving nation, while Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, after an account of his death and burial, gives a sketch of his character and details of portraits and statues of him.[xlv] The *cofiant*, as discussed above, gives

a substantial portion of its length to demonstrating the effect of its subject's life on those who knew him and admired him; and Williams adapts this also to her own purposes.

In place of the *cofiant*'s funeral sermons, she includes a chapter entitled "Testimonies to Carnhuanawc's Worth", a collection of eulogies to his patriotism and years spent preaching the importance of the Welsh language, literature and culture.[xlvi] These include prose valedictions in English from the unidentified duchess quoted above, the Celtic scholar and personal friend of Carnhuanawc Dr Carl Meyer (who described him as "a genuine Welshman…possessing to the highest degree that wonderful combination so peculiar to the Welsh character, of poetical intuition and analytic reasoning"), and William Meredith Thomas, who had worked on the bust of Carnhuanawc used as the volume's frontispiece, and hoped that "some day he will be rewarded by his countrymen". The tributes to Carnhuanawc in Welsh consist of *englynion* entered in competition at the 1851 Tremadoc Eisteddfod for the best "Epitaph" [in an *englyn*] on Carnhuanawc", for which Hall had donated a prize of two guineas. All these elegies emphasise Carnhuanawc's patriotism and his role as an epitome of Welshness: Ieuan Gwynedd described him as "the purest patriot" (puraf gwladgarwr), and Twrog praised him as "a patriot of valiant fame" (gwladgarwr, o glod gwrol). The winning entry by Robin Wyn o Eifion drew attention to Carnhuanawc's part in raising the status of Wales and its culture; "Carnhuanawc, giant of our island, made our name and [our] history well known":

(Carnhuanawc, cawr ein hynys - gwnai'n henw,
Gwnai'n hanes hysbys.)[xlvii]

As the preachers memorialised in *cofiannau* were shown devoting their lives and talents to the service of spreading the faith, so Carnhuanawc is presented as using his life and gifts in

the patriotic work of raising the status of Wales and widening knowledge of its history and culture.

Williams's final chapter, on "Welsh Music", discusses Carnhuanawc's lifelong interest in Welsh harp music and quotes at length from one of his personal notebooks on the history of the Welsh harp; the chapter is prefaced by a sketch by Hall of 'John Jones, Harper, Playing on the Prize Triple Harp which he won in 1839 at the Cardiff Eisteddfod' (Jones was one of the household harpists at Llanover),[xlviii] and is illustrated by Carnhuanawc's sketches of a harp key and appropriate fingering. Harp music had been one of his greatest interests from boyhood (the biography describes his early attempts to make a harp for himself), and while much of the book focusses on his historical, literary and antiquarian interests, this chapter serves as a reminder of another of his distinctively Welsh interests and contribution to Welsh cultural life.

Lengthy extracts from Carnhuanawc's notebook are followed by quotations from his letters to the harp-maker to the Prince of Wales which illustrate his technical and musical knowledge as well as his enthusiasm; this is followed by the summary of an article by John Williams (Ab Ithel) on the use of the harp in Welsh church music which quotes from documents of 1247 and 1250, and a remark by "the brilliant Sidney Owenson Lady Morgan" that "there is a sacred tone in all Welsh music".[xlix] Welsh patriotism and Welsh religious worship are thus not only brought together but given a long antiquarian pedigree - and one which, significantly, dates from the period of Welsh political independence - i.e. before the Edwardian conquest and the end of the last native Welsh dynasty in 1282-3.

Williams's own patriotic view of Welsh harp music

The chapter ends with a poem of six quatrains on 'Lines to the Welsh Harp' by Williams under her bardic name of 'Ysgafell', which presents the harp and its music not merely as one of Carnhuanawc's patriotic and cultural interests but as his surrogate, celebrating his country's history as he had done in his writing and speeches. Its final stanza draws inspiration from a historical source which would have been well known to her Welsh readers but considerably less familiar to most of those outside Wales:

> The Cymry still a people shall remain,
> And hold wild Wales through good and ill secure,
> Their language they shall keep, their harp retain,
> The bards declare, while earth and time endure!
>
> (Jane Williams, 1855, pp. 412-413)

This is in effect a versification of the words of the Old Man of Pencader, with some significant additions. The twelfth-century *Descriptio Kambriae* by Giraldus Cambrensis concludes with the anecdote of an incident at Pencader in Carmarthenshire on Henry II's march through Wales in 1163; Henry asked the Old Man, "who joined the King's forces against his own people because of their evil way of life", what he thought the outcome of the war would be. The Old Man's reply ended "Whatever else may come to pass, I do not think that on the day of Direst Judgement any race other than the Welsh, or any other language, will give answer to the Supreme Judge of all for this small corner of the earth".[l] This anecdote seems to have held a particular resonance for Williams (she had also used it in *Artegall*);[li] by following the example of Giraldus and placing it at the end of the biography she implies - like him - that it was the final word to be said on the subject. Further, replacing the Old Man by unspecified "bards" (many of whom certainly wrote on the same theme as the Old Man, if at greater length) transforms an individual's assertion of Welsh national

uniqueness into a collective opinion, since bards traditionally spoke for their country as did Carnhuanawc; in his speech at the Brecon Eisteddfod of 1824 (quoted earlier) Carnhuanawc had expressed a similar hope that Welsh patriotism would survive "as long as our mountains shall lift up their heads to the skies". Williams's final stanza, therefore, asserts that Welsh identity, and its powerful symbols of the Welsh language and Welsh harp music to which her biography had shown Carnhuanawc devoting his life, would also survive. The first stanza of Williams's poem also expresses the confidence that the Welsh harp will achieve "future fame"; and expectations for the future locate her views on Welsh national identity in different territory.

John Berger has proposed a useful distinction between 'cultures of progress' and 'cultures of survival'.[lii] Cultures of progress, he suggests, see their present as much better than their past and their future as brighter still, while cultures of survival, by contrast, see their present as less glorious than their past, and their future as doubtful and full of anxiety; their only prospect of maintaining even their present precarious position lies in the repetition of acts which keep their traditions alive, in a struggle against heavy odds in which victory lies not in defeating their enemies but in resisting their enemies' domination. The denigration of the Welsh people and their history, language and culture - which had existed for many centuries - had been given official status in the Blue Books of 1847. The contempt shown towards them by much of English officialdom, by many English people, and in many cases by Welsh people themselves, led to the culture of Wales being generally regarded as one of survival; indeed, in an age which regarded it as an anachronistic irrelevance, many Welsh people felt that its mere survival was the best they could hope for, and Carnhuanawc's hope that Welsh national identity could survive as long as the Welsh mountains played into this. By contrast, the emphasis in Williams's lines on the "future fame" of the most famous Welsh cultural symbol implied that, whether or not she saw the Welsh present as better than the Welsh past,

she certainly saw its future in terms of a culture of progress. At the moment of composing the lines she had rejected, if only briefly, the position described by Dawson and Johnson as a condition of "inbetween-ness" and had located herself unequivocally as a confident and optimistic Welsh patriot.

The social context

Williams's position is particularly revealing because, whatever the hopes might have been for the Welsh future, her biography of Carnhuanawc was written at a period when national self-confidence in the Welsh present was at a very low ebb; earlier in the century the Industrial Revolution had brought mine- and steel-works owners, managers and workers to south east Wales from all over Britain and Ireland, which had diluted the distinctively Welsh presence in those areas, and the main road from Chester to Holyhead, which saw a stream of coaches taking English-speaking travellers to and from the ferries to Ireland, had had a similar effect on the north coast. In addition, ambitious young Welshmen (and, increasingly, Welsh women) saw far greater opportunities in England than in rural Wales, while the association of English with the prestigious linguistic domains of public and political life, education, commerce and industry meant that many who stayed in Wales regarded English as the passport to social and financial success. The percentage of people living in Welsh-speaking areas of Wales shows a decline between 1801 and 1851 in Wales as a whole (from 54.6% to 41.5%); this trend is observable not only in the counties of south east Wales most affected by the Industrial Revolution (from 32.2% to 11.1% in Glamorgan; from 13.2% to 0.1% in Monmouthshire) but also in those counties regarded as the Welsh-speaking heartland (from 84.2% to 52.0% in Caernarvonshire; from 100% to 60.1% in Merionethshire).[liii]

Much of Welsh literary and cultural activity during this period was essentially antiquarian and looked back to a great and glorious past (the revival and re-creation of *eisteddfodau*; the formation of the Welsh Manuscript Society and the Welsh Minstrelsy Society; Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogion*), but for many commentators this only demonstrated that Welsh was a language of the past and that the past was where it should stay. Williams's decision to end her biography of Carnhuanawc with an assertion that Welsh national identity and culture had not only a glorious past but a glorious future is remarkable for its confident denial of the commonly-expected fate for the language.

Conclusion

Whereas in *Artegall* Williams had presented herself as an interpreter of Wales and the Welsh to English 'outsiders' and officialdom, seeing her task as defending those less educated, less articulate and less familiar with English modes of thought than she was, in her biography of Carnhuanawc she was writing from a position inside Welsh culture and society, aware that she was addressing subscribers and purchasers who, if they were sufficiently interested to read the book, would have been likely to know at least something about Carnhuanawc and the community from which he came. Whereas it would have been possible for her to write *Artegall* using only her reading in English and her personal experience, entering Carnhuanawc's world sufficiently to provide an accurate assessment of his cultural and social importance required not only a good knowledge of Welsh but of Welsh-speaking literary and social communities.

Her use of the characteristic structure of the *cofiant* spoke to her Welsh readers; by adopting the *cofiant*'s usual purpose - to memorialise a hero of religion and to inspire readers to emulate his example - to her own purposes she implied that to write his biography was to

perform a Welsh patriotic service and that she was using her talents for the benefit of the Welsh public just as Carnhuanawc had used his as a scholar and speaker; she was making his name and history known as he had made the name and history of Wales widely known, as reflected in the elegiac *englyn* by Robin Wyn o Eifion quoted earlier. If her use of the characteristically Welsh form of the *cofiant* was the result of a conscious decision, the contrast between the biography's English surface structure and its Welsh deep structure suggests that she had deliberately taken up the position of "both/and" which Dawson and Johnson identified; if, on the other hand, her use of the *cofiant's* structure was unconscious, it would suggest that she had internalised it as the appropriate form in which to celebrate the life and achievements of a major Welsh cultural figure. In either case, her position in relation to Wales and Welsh identity had undergone a major shift since *Artegall*; rather than being a knowledgeable observer of matters Welsh who could interpret them to English readers and convince them that the anti-Welsh prejudice of the 1847 Commissioners was unfair, she had moved to the position of a writer who, while knowing how to present Welsh material to English readers, understood and in many ways shared the knowledge and perspective of her Welsh readers; she was a writer who had been assimilated to Welshness.

In *Artegall* her position had been on the English side of the boundary, but with an awareness of the presence and characteristics of the Welsh side and an emotional involvement with Wales which, as the previous chapter demonstrated, took her closer and closer to the boundary-line itself. In her biography of Carnhuanawc she had crossed to the Welsh side, but retained a clear awareness of the presence and characteristics of the English side. The balance had shifted, but the condition of "inbetween-ness" remained.

Notes

i See the title-page of *Celtic Fables* (1862).

ii RLF MS, p. 7.

iii Jane Williams (1855), pp. 264-268.

iv See Tonn MSS 3.109A.

v NLW MS 26/9, 15 March 1854.

vi NLW MS 26/9, 26 February 1854, 10 October 1851, 31 March 1854.

vii NLW MS 26/9, 18 February 1854.

viii NLW MS 26/9, 27 March 1854.

ix NLW MS 26/9, 28 March 1854.

x NLW MS 26/9, 10 Oct., 12 Dec. 1851 and 23 Feb. 1854.

xi NLW MS 26/9, 14 Sept., 2 Oct., 15 March 1854.

xii NLW MS 26/9, 10 October 1851.

xiii Jane Williams (1854), p. xi.

xiv Jane Williams (1855), pp. 391-92.

xv The Celtic scholar Dr Carl Meyer, a member of the Llanover circle, was Prince Albert's Librarian and Secretary from 1847 until the Prince's death in 1861. (Fraser, 1968, p. 185).

xvi A. O. J. Cockshut, *Truth to Life: the Art of Biography in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Collins, 1974), p. 10; Joseph R. Reed Jnr., *English Biography in the Early Nineteenth Century 1802-1838* (New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 1965), p. vii.

xvii Reed, pp. 18-19, 21-21.

xviii Cockshut, p. 16.

xix Reed, p. 134.

xx Ibid, p. 53-54.

xxi Quoted in Reed, p. 5.

xxii Saunders Lewis, 'Y Cofiant Cymraeg' in *Meistri'r Canrifoedd* ed. by Geraint Gruffydd (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1973), pp. 341-56.

xxiii See William Williams (Pantycelyn), *Bywyd a Marwolaeth Theomemphus* (the life and death of Theomemphus) (1764).

xxiv Emyr Gwynne-Jones, 'Cofiannau', in *Gwŷr Llên y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Bymtheg a'u Cefndir,* ed. by Dyfnallt Morgan (Llandybïe: Llyfrau'r Dryw, 1968), p. 175.

xxv Saunders Lewis, p. 350.

xxvi Jane Williams (1855), p. 46.

xxvii Ibid, pp. 68-71.

xxviii Ibid, p. 71.

xxix Ibid, p. 89.

xxx After referring to the Welsh language as one of the "Usages Laws and Customs" of Wales which were different from those of England, the Act declared that one of its purposes was "utterly to extirp all and singular [these] sinister Usages and Customs" (25 Henry 8, c. 26) see *A Book of Wales,* ed. by D. M. and E. M. Lloyd (London; Glasgow: Collins, repr. 1960), p. 141.

xxxi Jane Williams (1855), pp. 128, 138.

xxxii Ibid, p. 48.

xxxiii Ibid, p. x.

xxxiv (1776-1834); niece of and hostess for Pitt the Younger when he was Prime Minister.

xxxv Jane Williams (1855), pp. 33-35.

xxxvi Ibid, pp. 38, 39.

xxxvii Ibid, p. 3.

xxxviii Ibid, p. 9.

xxxix Ibid, p. 346.

xl Ibid, pp. 374-380.

xli Ibid, p. 389.

xlii Reed, pp. 14, 17.

xliii Cockshut, p. 16.

xliv Thomas Carlyle, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* Vol. IV (London: Chapman and Hall, 1869 edn.), pp. 3-22.

xlv Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson*, ed. by Geoffrey Callender (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1922), pp. 320-22; J. G. Lockhart, *Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.,* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1853 edn), pp. 808-12.

xlvi Jane Williams (1855), pp. 386-392.

xlvii Ibid, p. 390.

xlviii Rachel Ley, pp. 33-35.

xlix Jane Williams (1855), p. 412.

l Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Journey through Wales,* trans. by Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1st publ. 1806; New York: Ams Press, 1968 repr. of 1863 edn), p. 274.

li Jane Williams (1848), pp. 27-28.

lii John Berger, *Pig Earth* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 1979), pp. 203-05.

liii All figures from Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998), p. 222.

CHAPTER 5

The *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr: an act of ventriloquism

Williams's next book moved her into a different and yet more complex position in relation to the boundary between the Englishness in which she had been brought up and educated, and the Welshness she had chosen to adopt. It is the book in which her position in relation to Wales is most nuanced and most fluid, and the book itself the most difficult to classify; it is an autobiography which is not an autobiography, a biography which is not a biography, a first-person novel which is not a novel. *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis a Balaclava Nurse* (1857) is an account of the life of a Welsh-speaking Welshwoman brought up in a distinctively Welsh community in an area of Wales considered the heartland of Welshness, recounted from the perspective of that Welshwoman but written by a woman born and brought up in the south-east of England - who, after living in Wales for some thirty years, had chosen to make London her permanent home. The implications of this for the book's genre will be discussed later in this chapter; I wish now to consider Williams's personally momentous decision to move back to London, since her reasons (as far as they can now be identified) are significant both for the ways in which she positioned herself in relation to Wales, and also had important implications for her writing.

Williams's move back to Chelsea

In the previously-quoted letter written during a visit to London, Williams delightedly acknowledged herself as a Londoner: "There is something I suppose in native air, for my

friends tell me that I am improving in looks as much as I feel myself to be in strength" (original emphasis).[i] The letter was written to Elizabeth Marsh, her mother's elder sister who had also been born and brought up in London and who was by that time living in Devon; it would be interesting to know if Williams expressed the same sentiments in letters to Welsh friends. The letter makes no reference to any old family friends or acquaintances whom Williams or Marsh might have remembered or kept in touch with; it seems that the place itself elicited this sense of a wanderer returned home.

In her application to the Royal Literary Fund in 1871, Williams explained that she had moved to London "to avoid the severity of winter among the Welsh mountains" because her "fragile" health had "broke[n] down"[ii]. This was a socially acceptable reason for the move; certainly she suffered from a heart-lung condition which became progressively more severe in the second half of her life and which eventually killed her (although not until she was 79), and her response to her return to London suggests that it improved her health and spirits. If this played a part in her decision to move, it is unlikely to have been the only reason: Talgarth is not situated among "the Welsh mountains" (Williams may have been relying on the trustees of the Royal Literary Fund lacking a detailed knowledge of Welsh geography), and she may have had more personal reasons for wishing to move. At the 1851 Census, Williams had been living in Neuadd Felen, Talgarth, with her mother and two youngest sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann (her other sister, Eleanor, was in Devon as companion to their aunt Elizabeth Marsh). In June 1851 Williams's mother died; on 27 June 1854 Williams's second brother,

Edward, gave Neuadd Felen as his address on his wedding certificate; unfortunately it is impossible to know when he moved there since the local tax records, which would provide the name of the householder, have not survived.[iii]

References to Edward in Williams's letters suggest that sharing a house with him might have been undesirable. On 23 March 1854, when staying in London with Hall, Williams wrote to her aunt that:

> I received a note from Edward informing me of his arrival in town, and wrote in reply to defer seeing him until the week after Easter, when I hope to be at home [i.e. Talgarth]. His habitual sneers at my acquaintance with Lady Hall, and my dread of the use w[hic]h he might attempt to make of Sir B[enjamin] and Lady H[all]'s acquaintance, were I to introduce him, have prevented me from doing what I sh[oul]d with pleasure have done, had his previous conduct enabled me to feel confidence in his gentlemanly and proper comportment.[iv]

At the 1841 Census, Williams was living at Aberllunvey House in Glasbury as companion to Isabella Hughes; Edward, whose profession is given as "solicitor", is listed as another member of the household. It is possible that Williams's fears of the consequences of introducing Edward to the Halls were based on memories of "his previous conduct" towards Hughes, another rich and influential patron, and that she wished to prevent any recurrence. Further, evidence from his death certificate indicates that in his later years, Edward was an alcoholic, which may explicate his lack of "gentlemanly conduct".[v] Williams's letter demonstrates great anxiety for the possible effect on her standing with the Halls of any contact with Edward ("dread" is an unusually strong word in her lexicon) and a determination not to allow him to jeopardise her friendship with them, from which she had gained so much. In these circumstances, living at Neuadd Felen with Edward as head of the household and his wife as its mistress might not have been an unalloyed pleasure. Social attitudes of the time, however, would have made it impossible for her to remain in the same area as her brother while living separately.

Her move to Chelsea would therefore have presented many advantages - although not necessarily for her health. In the mid-1850s Chelsea was the site of several industrial enterprises (for example: a distillery, a white lead factory, and the Chelsea waterworks, which collected waste water from sewers and open ditches before filtering it).[vi] For a writer, however, Chelsea had many advantages. *Artegall* and *The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price Carnhuanawc* had established her as an author of considerable interest on Welsh subjects, and both had been published by William Rees of Llandovery who had connections with Longmans in London. Further, in London she had much easier access to other publishers and editors from whom she might hope to gain commissions for reviews and articles as well as future books. Chelsea by this period was well established as the home of many writers and artists, both major - Leigh Hunt, Carlyle, Turner, Holman Hunt, Daniel Maclise (and for a time, Karl Marx) - and minor, such as the authors Samuel Carter Hall, his wife Anna Maria, and Geraldine Jewsbury (a member of the Llanover circle);[vii] Anna Maria Hall and Jewsbury later wrote references to support Williams's application to the Royal Literary Fund.[viii] In Chelsea Williams would therefore be living among people with the same literary, artistic and intellectual interests as her own; it was also an area of respectable lodging-houses suitable for a middle-class single woman on a modest income. She lived in London for the rest of her life, occasionally visiting Talgarth and Hereford (to visit family members), and spending months at Llanover Court, especially to use its library for research.

Hall and 'The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis'

As the previous chapters have shown, *Artegall* and the *Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price Carnhuanawc* had been written with the active support of Augusta Hall, and possibly at her behest; evidence suggests that this is equally true of *The Autobiography of Elizabeth*

Davis a Balaclava Nurse. Elizabeth Davis (better known in Wales as Betsy Cadwaladyr) knew Hall well enough to receive a character reference from her when she enrolled as a nurse with the British army in the Crimea; the Nurses' Register records that she was "well known and respected by Lady Hall of Llanover".[ix] According to the *Autobiography*, for separate periods in 1851 and 1852 Cadwaladyr had worked as housemaid for a "Lady ____", a Welshwoman who owned houses in London and south Wales and who "on hearing that I was Dafydd Cadwaladyr's daughter" wished to speak to her personally.[x] While working at "Lady ___" 's London home, Cadwaladyr had frequently seen Lord Raglan, whose house "stood near", and when they met again in the General Hospital at Balaclava, Raglan recognised her as having lived in "Stanhope Street".[xi] The 1851 Census and contemporary Post Office directories for London show that Raglan lived at no. 5 Great Stanhope Street and that the Halls lived at no. 9; as far as I have been able to establish, Hall was the only woman living in this street during this period who met all the criteria for "Lady ___".

According to the *Autobiography,* Cadwaladyr returned from the Crimea "in the decline of life and with broken health… [and] unprovided for", and the portrait used as the book's frontispiece (Figure 4) draws attention to her deformed right hand, which would have made both domestic service and nursing - the only work of which she had any experience - impossible.[xii] Servants in this position often applied to ex-employers for help; Hall may well have felt that a book which celebrated the patriotic service of a remarkable Welshwoman while raising money to support her in her poverty-stricken old age offered a solution to the problem - and she had an in-house prose writer available to do the writing. Hall's involvement in the project is demonstrated by the fact that she allowed her verse translation of an elegy in Welsh by Cadwaladyr's father (on Thomas Charles of Bala) to be included and attributed to her: "Translation by G. G." - the initials of Hall's bardic name, Gwenynen Gwent, by which she was known in Welsh literary and cultural circles at this period.[xiii] No

records survive to show if Hall paid for the book's publication, as she had for *Artegall;*[xiv] Williams would presumably have given her services free as her own personal contribution.

Hall's involvement offers an explanation for the defensive tone with which Williams discusses her own contribution to the book: "A cursory reader may suppose that the writer had merely to listen and record, but the task of preparing the narrative has really involved much care and labour".[xv] The note of complaint makes it unlikely that the book was Williams's own idea and project.

'The Heroine and narrator of these adventures"

Since Williams wrote Cadwaladyr's *Autobiography*, the book fails the basic criterion for an autobiography; it is not "a retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence".[xvi] Williams's choice of nomenclature is significant: in her Preface and Introduction to the autobiographical narrative (hereafter referred to as the Autobiography) she refers to herself as "the writer" and Cadwaladyr as "the heroine"; but in the Preface she also describes Cadwaladyr as "the heroine and narrator of these adventures".[xvii] Usually "the narrator" is used for the person who narrates events to the reader, but here Cadwaladyr had narrated events to Williams and it was Williams who narrated them to the reader; using the phrase "the narrator of these adventures" for Cadwaladyr contains an implicit contradiction. In a first-person novel, of course, this use of "narrator" would be standard but would have an entirely different meaning; here, for the narrator of an autobiography not to be identical to the subject of the autobiography renders the classification of the autobiography in relation to genre even more complex.

An autobiography written by someone other than the autobiography's subject immediately raises the question of genre, since its use of "I" has different implications for readers when it is mediated by a second person (and the "I" is in fact "I + another") than when readers know that the "I" 's referent is the autobiography's subject alone. Boris Uspenky has discussed first-person narrative in the novel in terms which are highly applicable to the Autobiography - "In describing what the character has seen and observed, the author would use the character's language, in the form of quasi-direct discourse, internal monologue or in some other form; thus the author's position would also concur with the position of that particular character on the phraseological level" - while emphasising that the author can "incorporate himself with the character on the phraseological level while estranging himself from the character in terms of evaluation".[xviii]

Bakhtin has argued that many elements of a literary work are determined by the way in which the author perceives his/her main character, and that awareness of the reader's (future) presence affects that perception and the relation between the author and the main character.[xix] In a conventional autobiography, that relation would be single and direct: between the flesh-and-blood subject of the autobiography and the persona she/he had created through choice of words and material. In the case of the Autobiography, however, two different "relations" were in operation: one between the flesh-and-blood Williams and the flesh-and-blood Cadwaladyr, and the other between Williams the author and the Cadwaladyr whom Williams's writing had created and presented to readers. The relation between the writer and the main character resembles both that in a conventional autobiography and that in a first-person novel, but because of its dual nature it does not accord completely with either. The Autobiography, therefore, while exhibiting elements of both the autobiography and the novel, resists being classified as either.

Ireneusz Opacki has argued that "genres do not have unchanging, fixed constitutive features", that features of particular genres can lose their status of genre markers, and that the resultant "hybridisation, the interweaving of [multiple] genre forms" requires the boundaries between genres to be dissolved; the Autobiography demonstrates exactly this interweaving of the genres of autobiography and the novel, and the result is an even greater hybridisation of an already hybrid form.[xx]

Victorian autobiography

Writers on Victorian autobiography have typically described the genre as already "hybrid", as a "border genre", as "an amalgam, and "a diversity of forms";[xxi] its rights even to be considered a genre at all have been questioned.[xxii] The variety and referential ambiguity of Williams's linguistic labels for the roles which she and Cadwaladyr played in the construction and writing of the Autobiography make prominent the fact that the degree of hybridity in the status of its narrative is even greater than in conventional autobiographies; if autobiography is "a border genre", then the Autobiography, situated on the border of a border genre, is even more liminal. Certainly the boundary between (auto)biography and the novel has long been seen as especially permeable: Barthes describes a biography as "a novel which dare not speak its name", and John Updike considered most biographies to be "novels with indexes;[xxiii] while many novelists of the period, including Dickens, the Brontês and Charles Kingsley, used autobiographical narration (the subtitle of *Jane Eyre*, for example, is *An Autobiography*). If the Autobiography has some characteristics of a novel, it is relevant to consider what type of novel it might be.

Both its content and its narrator's approach suggest a sub-class of the novel genre popular in previous centuries; the picaresque novel, with which it shares an adventurous and solitary

protagonist, an episodic structure, the power of accident and frequently improbable coincidence, lack of a tidy resolution in its final chapters, and characters who "appear, disappear, and often reappear without the picaro's seeking them".[xxiv] Many novels which use the conventions of the picaresque provide a Preface supposedly written by an editor who transcribed the book's raw material; for example, the title page of *Candide* gains a doubly distancing effect by declaring that the novel was derived from the papers of a dead man **and** translated from German,[xxv] while the preface to *Moll Flanders* not only complains of the task of writing the book in tones similar to Williams's but muddies the waters thoroughly by the juxtaposition of its title ("Author's Preface") with its comment that "The author is here supposed to be writing her own history", so that on the same page "the author" refers both to the protagonist and to the persona used to frame it.[xxvi] Williams's use of "the narrator" in the *Autobiography*'s Preface, discussed earlier, presents an interesting parallel.

Williams's authorial presence

The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis a Balaclava Nurse contains not only the first-person narrative of Cadwaladyr's life (the Autobiography), but a Preface, Introduction, Appendices and Postscript by Williams writing in her own persona. Further, the Autobiography uses epigraphs at the head of each chapter from the English literary canon (Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope), the Bible and Welsh proverbs, and includes footnotes, some amplifying information in the text and others calling into question, or even contradicting, 'facts' which the narrative presents as reliable. The result is that Williams's authorial persona is overt throughout the book, constantly obtruding - or at least threatening to obtrude - on the relation carefully established between 'Cadwaladyr' the first-person narrator, and the reader. Certainly in the narrative Williams, in Uspensky's words, "assumes the position of the character with

whom, according to the author's intention, the reader will identify" but the reader is also made constantly aware of the narrative's compositional framing, "expressed by a clear alternation between descriptions structured from within and without, and the [clearly-defined] transitions between them".[xxvii]

Genre: when is an autobiography not an autobiography?

Characteristics of the autobiography are considerably more than a matter of first-person narration, of course, and identifying elements which the Autobiography shares with a novel allows for an analysis of its narrative structures; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan has suggested that some analytic tools used for fiction can be applied also to texts regarded as 'non-fiction', including autobiography.[xxviii] Her description of the way in which traits of the protagonist foregrounded in the text can be at variance with those which emerge from the narrative is very relevant to the Autobiography;[xxix] the narrator's comments constantly present Cadwaladyr as efficient both at managing her own life and looking after others, but many incidents reveal her as rash, gullible and self-centred. If Cadwaladyr had written the Autobiography herself, then this disjunction would emphasise her lack of self-awareness; the fact that she is presented to the reader through the choices - of language and content - by a second person who may not have shared her view of herself powerfully increases the estranging effect.

This raises a further question; who was the intended reader? Bakhtin argued that "of very special character and interest for analysis is the author's sense of his listener in the form of the confession and the autobiography".[xxx] The fact that the author and the narrator of the Autobiography are different people creates an additional level of complexity in respect of the intended or imagined reader also, since Williams and Cadwaladyr came from different social,

economic and educational backgrounds and are likely to have had different views of the book's readers and their reactions not only to the events of the Autobiography but the fact that it had been written at all.

Valerie Sanders has suggested that "most Victorian women saw autobiography as a forbidden area", and Martin Hewitt has argued that "Victorian protocols effectively denied the validity of women's lives as fit subjects for autobiographical constriction".[xxxi] By allowing her autobiography to be written and published Cadwaladyr was certainly putting herself into the public sphere, although this presumption was mitigated to a degree by the fact that the *Autobiography*'s stated purpose was a charitable one: to raise money to "contribute to the comfort of her latter years".[xxxii]

Further, Cadwaladyr's life and personality, as presented in its pages, do not conform to the socially acceptable modes of behaviour and attitudes for a woman of the period. Linda Paterson has demonstrated how men could be shown playing multiple roles on the public stage (for example: statesmen, scientists, authors) while women were presented only as wives, daughters, sisters or mistresses.[xxxiii] Their essentially relational existence was expressed by Sarah Stickney Ellis in *Women of England* (1839): "Women, considered in their distinct and abstract nature, as isolated beings, must lose more than half their worth. They are, in fact, from their own constitution and from the station they occupy in the world, strictly relative".[xxxiv] . The life of Cadwaladyr, whose father, Dafydd Cadwaladyr, was a well-known preacher with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection and a friend of the prominent Calvinistic Methodist Thomas Charles of Bala, could well have been written as that of a dutiful and admiring daughter; in fact, the Autobiography continually presents her as flouting her father's paternal and spiritual authority (and winning the battle of wills between them) and as making an independent life for herself many thousands of miles away. Other

characters come and go in its pages, but Cadwaladyr always remains the focus of the narrative's interest.

The trajectory of Cadwaladyr's life

The Autobiography shows her not merely as self-reliant but as self-sufficient. It records that at the age of nine she ran away from the family farm outside Bala to the house of her father's landlord in the town, where she stayed for five years; at this point she promised to stay for another year, but decided the following day "that I must see something more of the world" and ran away again, to Liverpool.[xxxv] After several years there as a domestic servant (travelling widely in Europe with one employer, including "an excursion" to the field of Waterloo five days after the battle), she ran away again (from a fiancé) to London and later began working as a maid to the captains' wives on a series of merchant ships, visiting India, China, Brazil, Singapore, Greece, Australia, the West Indies, St. Helena, South Africa, Egypt and islands in the Pacific, alternating these voyages with periods in Britain as a domestic servant; she also worked as a nurse at Guy's Hospital in London. In October 1854, reading a newspaper report of the Battle of the Alma, she offered her services as a military nurse, impelled by the twin desires "to see what was going on, and to take care of the wounded" (her order of priorities is revealing).[xxxvi] Determined to go to Balaclava, and rejecting the authority of Florence Nightingale (whose official instructions restricted her activities to Turkey), Cadwaladyr spent nine months in the General Hospital at Balaclava, working for six weeks as a nurse and for the rest of the time as the cook in charge of the kitchen providing special diets for soldiers too ill or weak to be able to stomach British Army rations. By her own account, she worked a nineteen-hour day seven days a week, and was eventually invalided back to Britain in "broken" health.[xxxvii]

As this summary of the *Autobiography*'s narrative line demonstrates, its account of Cadwaladyr's life not only shows her as a woman on her own rather than as a member of a married couple or a family but also as a woman who made her own decisions about what to do, where to go and when to go there. In contrast to attitudes to female autobiographers summarised by Sanders's and Hewitt's comments quoted above, the *Autobiography* asserts that Cadwaladyr's life was incontrovertibly a "fit subject for autobiographical construction", not because of her relationship to any man or because she had been present at significant events, but because her life was of intrinsic interest in its own right.

The disjunctive female autobiography

It was been suggested that male and female autobiographers of this period showed marked differences in their presentation of the self. Sanders argues that "male authors inscribe themselves into texts as autonomous subjects free from the constraints of any social context", while Elizabeth Jay suggests that female autobiographers located themselves in relation to the patriarchal family.[xxxviii] Gilmore regards the ego boundaries of male autobiographers as inflexible and those of female autobiographers as flexible.[xxxix] Further, Sanders sees most male autobiographers of the period as recounting (and accounting for) their own success, but women as associating hopes of success with guilt, while Jelinek identifies an "apologetic, self-deprecating" tone in female autobiographies.[xl] By contrast, Cadwaladyr's Autobiography presents her as an autonomous woman, self-assertive rather than self-deprecating and troubled only rarely and fleetingly by any feelings of guilt. However, the corpora on which these critics base their observations consist of autobiographical writings by middle- and upper-class women; apparently no detailed analysis of autobiographies by working-class women during this period has been published. Contributions by women to John Burnett's two

collections of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century working-class autobiographies (*Useful Toil* and *Destiny Obscure*), however, frequently communicate a self-confidence and independence which chimes with Cadwaladyr's, although the Autobiography is more clearly individualised and contains livelier and more vivid detail.

However, the disjunctive and discontinuous narrative fits the description of female autobiography rather than the "patterns of coherence and unity" seen as typical of autobiographies by men.[xli] Certainly it follows the general pattern of childhood-adulthood-old age, but the events are not ordered by chronology, theme or characters. The first three-quarters of the narrative also has a tendency to recount a particular event, move to a generalised account of a longer undefined period, and then follow this with a very specific indication of time ("on Tuesday"; "the next day""), which is meaningless because it lacks temporal context.[xlii] In this respect, the Autobiography resembles the narrative which Bakhtin characterises as "the Greek romance", full of random contingency and chance rupture, in which words like "earlier" and "later" are "crucially, even decisively, significant, [since] should something happen a minute earlier or a minute later…these crucial events would not have happened".[xliii] This would destroy the plot of any novel; for Cadwaladyr, according to the Autobiography, her life would have been completely different.

Certainly the last quarter of the narrative, which deals with Cadwaladyr's experiences as a military nurse in Turkey and the Crimea, has a much clearer time-line, but in the greater part of the Autobiography the acceleration and deceleration of the story (discussed by Rimmon-Kenan) is one of its most notable features.[xliv] Confusingly, there is no certainty that the long, generalised periods of time are relatively unimportant, or that the shorter, detailed periods of time are relatively significant, in terms of the whole narrative. Unlike the reader's assumption when reading all but the most unconventional or experimental novels, there is no sense that it

will be possible to arrive at the type of conclusion described by Rimmon-Kenan as "a 'finalised hypothesis', an overall meaning which makes sense of the text as a whole".[xlv] There is no sense, for example, that Cadwaladyr's time working at the British military hospital in Balaclava was the happiest or most important period of her life; it is presented, rather, as a period which was interesting, demanding, sometimes frustrating and which she felt satisfaction in doing well - but all these qualities had been present in varying degrees in many of her previous experiences.

Both these elements - the disjunctive use of acceleration and deceleration, and the lack of a finalised hypothesis - in some ways help to reinforce the authenticity of the account of Cadwaladyr's life, since they accord with many readers' experience that 'real life' is closer to a disjointed succession of random events than an organised sequence leading to a logical conclusion, and if Cadwaladyr were the author of the text as well as its narrator this would be unproblematic. The fact that the author was Williams - a well-read and experienced writer, aware both of literary conventions and of the fact that she was "incorporating herself" with the character of Cadwaladyr (to use Uspensky's formulation) - makes the disjunctures and lack of finalisation deliberate and therefore, in a sense, deliberately problematic.

The Autobiography's factual accuracy

In the Preface, Williams describes how she received the raw material for the narrative and how she treated it. Cadwaladyr, she said:

> possessed no written records of her life, no memoranda, no tangible and visible helps to memory. In a desultory and digressive manner, she gave, to the best of her recollection, an account of the principal facts of her own remarkable history…Discrepancies and mistakes may be detected in the details, errors in chronology, errors in geography, and

> errors in the orthography of names and in the designation of persons… With the guidance of its heroine, and the light of analogy, the incidents have been arranged in consecutive order. Footnotes have been added in order to identify persons, to verify facts, to correct exaggerations, and to show the probability of some extraordinary statements. (Jane Williams, 1857, I, 4)

This implies that Cadwaladyr was unable to remember when some events had happened, where they had happened, and in which order they had happened, and that although Williams had checked the information where possible (and discovered that some of it contained "exaggerations") she was unable to vouch for the factual accuracy of much of the narrative. She does not mention that in some cases her footnotes reveal that the narrative contained not merely exaggerations but inaccuracies; for example, the statement in the narrative that on a tour of Scotland with her Liverpool employers Cadwaladyr stayed at "Argyle Castle" produces the footnote: "Query - Inverary", indicating that Williams's research showed that "Argyle Castle" does not exist and that the visit must have been made to Inverary Castle (which is in Argyll).[xlvi] A more important example relates to the father of Cadwaladyr's long-hopeful Portuguese suitor, who could not have been "brother to King John the Eighth of Portugal", since only six kings of Portugal were named "John" (Joăo).[xlvii] The lives of the other historical figures mentioned are described in detailed footnotes, and Williams's later account of the Portuguese royal family shows that she had read its history; she would have known that by permitting a reference to a non-existent monarch she was perpetrating a blatant factual inaccuracy.[xlviii] One footnote expresses the literary equivalent of amused resignation in the face of a particularly outrageous traveller's tale. Cadwaladyr's description of seeing a "strange monster" in the West Indies which had a head like a shark, holes for ears, six wings,

twelve feet, was green with a belly the colour of oyster-shells, its front part "feathery" and its hind quarters "shelly", produced a footnote consisting entirely of a sardonic verse by Cowper:

'Can this be true?' an arch observer cries,
'Yes' (rather moved) 'I saw it with these eyes.'
'Sir, I believe you, on that ground alone;
I could not, had I seen it with my own'.

(Jane Williams, 1987, p. 57)

That the references to "Argyle Castle" and "John the Eighth" (which, since it uses words rather than Roman numerals, cannot be attributed to a compositor's error) and to the fantastic monster remain in the narrative implies that Cadwaladyr had control of the contents of the Autobiography's text, while Williams controlled the footnotes. It also suggests that Cadwaladyr's "guidance" may have made Williams's task more difficult and added yet another layer of complexity to the process of its writing. The contrast between information in the narrative and in the footnotes suggests a further parallel with one of the English descendants of the picaresque novel; the narrator's breezy assurance in the preface to *The Adventures of Roderick Random* that "I have not deviated from nature in the facts [of the narrative], which are all true in the main" - an assurance subsequently undermined by the narrative's own footnotes - makes Smollett's phrase "true in the main" particularly applicable to the Autobiography.[xlix]

Inaccuracies and exaggerations on details inevitably raise the question of the Autobiography's accuracy on more substantive points of fact - important since the narrative makes serious and specific criticisms of Florence Nightingale. She had been made responsible for the distribution of 'Free Gifts' (mainly shirts, scarves and greatcoats), which had been bought with money donated by the British public to be given to British soldiers; the Autobiography

asserts that in the military hospital at Scutari, consignments of these goods which had been stored in a leaking outhouse (also used as a stable) had in consequence become completely rotten and useless, and also records that Cadwaladyr had found 'Free Gifts' marked 'Direct from the Crimea' on sale in Woolwich and Deptford. Cadwaladyr also accused Nightingale of the "miserable mismanagement" which led to nurses "waiting in vain, like myself, for employment while the wards and corridors [of the British military hospital at Scutari] were filled with grievously sick and wounded men".[l]

There had been other attacks on Nightingale by critical ex-nurses - an anonymous account of experiences at the Scutari hospital in 1855 and *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses - a Narrative of Twelve Months' Experience in the Hospitals of Koulali and Scutari* by Fanny Taylor in 1856 - and Mary Stanley, who led the group of nurses which included Cadwaladyr, returned early from the Crimea, used her influence to ensure criticisms of Nightingale reached influential officials in the War Office, and supported Charlotte Salisbury, a nurse dismissed from the Scutari hospital for dishonesty, in her libel action against Nightingale.[li] This climate of opinion made it certain that Nightingale's friends and defenders would read the *Autobiography* and use any factual inaccuracies to undermine its reliability in relation to Nightingale; Selina Bracebridge, one of Nightingale's closest friends and her personal assistant at Scutari, described the *Autobiography* in a letter to Nightingale's sister Parthenope as "that odious, lying book", although it is unclear whether this was an accusation of specific lies or more general distaste for a book which presented Nightingale unsympathetically.[lii]

Williams seems to have been very aware of such potential criticisms; the chapters of the Autobiography which recount Cadwaladyr's experiences during the Crimean War are buttressed by four "Supplements", three long Appendices, a "Postscript" and a series of lengthy footnotes, which all support Cadwaladyr's allegations and assert her honesty and

reliability. Their contents range from documents in the public domain (the 'Official Circular to the nurses about to join the Army Hospitals in the East' and the full text of the ' 47th Regulation for the Management of Army Hospitals') to accounts of other nurses' experiences at the Scutari and Balaclava military hospitals and character references for Cadwaladyr from the Principal Medical Officer, the Purveyor to the Forces at Balaclava and the Superintendant of nurses at Scutari, who declared that Cadwaladyr was "ever to be depended on, good, honest and devoted".[liii] Several of these testimonies were apparently written in response to letters from Williams, and the amount of material she amassed to support Cadwaladyr's statements and testify to her good character demonstrate that the factual accuracy of the raw material she had received was a matter of considerable concern to her.

Williams's concern to corroborate what Cadwaladyr had told her draws attention to another layer of complexity; it is impossible to know how many, and which, of its 'facts' were volunteered by Cadwaladyr and how many, and which, were produced in response to Williams's questions. It is also, of course, impossible to know whether Williams included all the anecdotes she was given and, if she did not, her criteria for selection. David Amigoni has suggested that Victorian identity was "a complex compound" and that Victorian life-writing is "best seen in terms of complex overlapping contested constituencies";[liv] Williams's rôle - at once mediating and creative - in the production of Cadwaladyr's autobiography takes the complexity of the compound and the contested nature of the overlapping constituencies to a new level.

The possibility that Cadwaladyr may have insisted on the inclusion or omission of some material raises in a particularly acute form questions which lie at the heart of the reader's response to any autobiography: what is not talked about, and why? Rimmon-Kenan has discussed the contrasting modes and purposes of temporary and permanent information

gaps;[lv] in an autobiography where the writer is the subject, plausible reasons can often be suggested for such gaps, but the complexity of the roles of Cadwaladyr and Williams in the production of the Autobiography - collaboration in some areas but retention of their independence in others - makes this impossible.

The language of the Autobiography

The collaborative nature of the Autobiography makes irrelevant many points in analyses of the language of autobiographies; for example, John Sturrock's statement that "through their use of language, writers of autobiographies are not reporting on the process of their singularity but performing it" cannot apply when Cadwaladyr's "singularity" is mediated through Williams's linguistic decisions.[lvi] The distinction made by both Machann and Gilmore between the *I* of the historical person who lived the life being recounted, the *I* who is the protagonist of the narrative and the *I* who is the author responsible for the choice of every word of the text, acquires a different significance when the first and second *I*s refer to the same person but the third *I* to a different one.[lvii] This question is particularly acute when the different *I*s are from different social classes and backgrounds, different in the length and nature of the education they received, and different in the range of linguistic registers and literary models with which they are familiar.

In his introduction to a collection of working-class autobiographies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, John Burnett locates the value of the texts in the fact that "they are direct records of the person involved in the situation from which he or she writes at first hand. There is no intermediary reporter or observer to change the situation".[lviii] The contrast he draws between the description of direct experience by the participant and the description of the event by an observer emphasises a further degree of complexity in the construction of the

Autobiography, since the direct experience of the participant, Cadwaladyr, is entirely mediated through the writer, Williams, who had not observed the events and had to rely on the verbal representation of those events from Cadwaladyr (delivered orally) as the basis for her own representation of the same events in (written) words.

Burnett describes the language of nineteenth-century working-class autobiographies as simple, with a limited vocabulary, but making its points clearly and concisely: "Evidently there existed a working-class literary form, which was quite distinct from 'polite' literature".[lix] Certainly the language of the Autobiography is notably different from that of Williams's in her own (literary) persona. The Autobiography describes Cadwaladyr's reaction to news of the British army's involvement in war in the Crimea as follows:

> After having been abroad, I always liked to know what was going on in the world, and this curiosity made me an eager reader of the newspapers. Sitting one evening with my sister, I read in one of them an account of the battle of the Alma.
> "Oh!" said I, "if I had wings, would I not go!"
> "What", answered Bridget, "go to be a soldier? Well, I can believe anything if you have changed your mind about them."
>
> (Jane Williams, 1987, p. 153)

This passage explains, in the simple language described by Burnett, why Cadwaladyr read newspapers and where she read about a specific battle of the Crimean War, and communicates her decision to go there through her conversation with her affectionately sceptical sister; the inversion of "said I", often used in traditional stories and folk-ballads, locates her response to what she has read in a particular working-class linguistic context.

Williams' account of popular reaction to the same news (in an appendix) uses a very different linguistic register:

> The long preceding peace of Europe, the unbroken practice of industrious arts and quiet labours, the existence of a majority among the population to whom war was known only as an old tradition or a distant rumour caused surprise to mingle with compassion at the first information which reached Britain of the occurrence of the sufferings inalienably incident to warlike operations.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1987, p. 212)

This is the register of a sociologist providing a historical context for a reaction seen in a proportion of the population large enough for its response to be worthy of comment ("the majority"), who then analyses that reaction into its component parts ("surprise mingle[d] with compassion"). The cause of this reaction is further distanced from writer and reader by the use of abstract nouns ("sufferings inalienably incident to warlike operations"); "sufferings" takes its readers very far from the lived experience of the soldiers in filthy, blood-stained uniforms whose maggot-infested wounds are described in the Autobiography's account of the military hospital at Balaclava, while "warlike operations" are far more distant from the reader than "war".[lx] The use of Latin-derived vocabulary to argue that the soldiers' sufferings were unavoidable ("inalienably incident") increases the impersonality of the style; this is the report of an impartial observer who can identify a trend in public opinion, analyse the way it fits into the wider social picture and describe it in one long structurally-complex third-person sentence. The narrative's account, by contrast, contains ten uses of personal pronouns (eight of the first person, two of the second), two exclamations and one question, in two sentences of narrative and three of direct speech (including such elements of everyday conversation as "Oh!", "What[!]" and "Well"). Both registers are entirely appropriate in context and successfully achieve their very different purposes; the fact that they were written by the same person shows the range of linguistic styles that Williams was able to deploy.

The Autobiography shows Williams successfully ventriloquizing the speech of a working-class woman, but the epigraphs from the English literary canon as well as the footnotes (which are more obtrusive than end-notes) serve to remind readers that the Autobiography is a more sophisticated and complex work than first impressions of its narrative and narrator might suggest. Williams's comments on the style of the Autobiography in her Preface are revealing:

> It was impossible in all parts to give the exact language spoken. The writer has therefore aimed at conveying a true reflex of her exact meaning, preferring the general sense to literary precision.
>
> Wherever the very words of the heroine were apt and striking, they were retained.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1857, I, 4)

It would be interesting to know why Williams judged that giving Cadwaladyr's "exact language spoken" was "impossible": because it was in too colloquial a register? because it contained too many of the breaks, changes of direction and second thoughts which often characterise an oral account and need revision to turn it into a readable and comprehensible narrative? because Williams judged some of its vocabulary to be socially inappropriate? Whatever the reason, the result of her mediation is to add to the polyphonous nature of the *Autobiography* as a whole; the contrast is not only between the standard, prestigious register of Williams writing *in propria persona* and Cadwaladyr's informal, more demotic, less prestigious variety (a contrast made particularly obvious when Williams adds footnotes in the standard register to the narrative in Cadwaladyr's register), but between the (now irrecoverable) actual words of Cadwaladyr to Williams and the words which Williams attributed to Cadwaladyr (Graham Pechey, writing on Bakhtin, points out that polyphony "can at the very least be problematic because of [what is] excluded or repressed").[lxi] Certainly these sentences imply that it was Williams's judgement which decided whether

Cadwaladyr's "very words" were sufficiently "apt and striking" to be used, and that her criteria were essentially literary. Her use of "reflex" may refer to the process by which a reflex camera reflected the desired image in a pivoted, surface-silvered mirror before taking a photograph (letters from and about her in the early 1850s make clear her interest in optics and the physics of light);[lxii] it certainly indicates that she viewed the Autobiography as presenting Cadwaladyr's "meaning" at an angle of reflection rather than directly. For the reader, these comments give the same message about the Autobiography's style as those discussed earlier on its content: some parts of it come from Cadwaladyr, but it is impossible to identify which they are.

Williams therefore comes between Cadwaladyr and the reader both in relation to the Autobiography's style and its content; her description of how she saw her task as a whole appears in a revealing extended metaphor followed by a striking comparison:

> To seize the first floating end of each subject that chanced to present itself, to draw it out, to disentangle it, to piece it, to set the warp straight and firmly in the loom, and to cast the woof aright, so as to produce the true and original pattern of such tapestry, has required sedulous application. The winding of silkworms' cocoons without a reel is scarcely a task of more difficult manipulation.
>
> (Jane Williams (1857), I, p. 4)

One of the most interesting features of this metaphor is that it does not work in literal terms (and most of Williams' metaphors work very precisely and literally). If the end of each thread is "floating" and needs to be "disentangle[d]" and "piece[d]" - i.e. spun together with other threads to make one longer thread - and if the vertical threads of the warp need to be "set" in the loom and the horizontal threads of the woof need to be woven, then the tapestry must have been so completely dismantled that it would have been impossible to see its "true and original pattern", and therefore to know whether that pattern had been successfully recreated.

The need to disentangle and piece the threads removes the possibility that the tapestry is merely in a damaged condition and that its ragged or incomplete sections need repair; it no longer exists as a tapestry, and has to be entirely remade. The metaphor implies that in writing the Autobiography Williams had woven a new tapestry, which certainly was likely to bear some resemblance to the original since it used the same threads, but was essentially her own creation; the previous tapestry had left no markers or outlines of its design which she could use as the basis for the new one. The comparison used in the second sentence quoted above also implies the lack of a stable and clearly-defined fixed point around which the new work could be fitted; the raw material might be capable of being spun into silk, but without a firm base it could very easily become a mere confused jumble.[lxiii]

On the surface, therefore, these two sentences present another reminder of the time and energy which the Autobiography had required, and Williams's use of "manipulation", while used here in its literal sense, is a further reminder of her role in moulding the raw material she had received into a new shape. Her assertions earlier in the Preface that "the narrative as a whole bears internal evidence of the light of its truth", and that "a free translation often renders the sense of an original with more truth than a literal one" work with the metaphor of the tapestry to make clear how she saw - and how she defended - her role in the production of the Autobiography: that she had created an artefact which reflected that truth but was not a literal re-presentation of it. The complexity of her role, in relation both to the Autobiography's content and its style, means that it stands alone among Williams's works in a (borderline, sub-) genre of its own.

The Welshness of Betsy Cadwaladyr

The Autobiography makes clear that it is not only the narrative of Cadwaladyr's "extraordinary character and history" but an account of the life of a remarkable Welshwoman.[lxiv] The fact that Cadwaladyr had lived outside Wales for the previous forty years seems if anything to have strengthened her awareness of her Welsh identity; her entry in the Nurses' Register, from information she provided at her interview in November 1854. describes her as "of Bala".[lxv] Throughout the narrative, being Welsh is presented as an essential component of her identity and a determinant of her approach to the people she meets (noting carefully their place of origin if they were Welsh), the places she visits, and the experiences she had there. When she was passing through London Docks and a stranger asked her if she was from the West Indies (she was heavily tanned after a voyage to the tropics and "my black eyes made me look as if I was not a European") she replied "No, I am a Welshwoman" rather than declaring herself British.[lxvi] Her Welshness is also used as an explanation - possibly a defence - of insubordinate behaviour in response to unfair treatment (as she saw it) by members of a higher social class. Her response to Nightingale's warning of the consequences of "misbehaviour" was "This put up my Welsh blood and I told her that neither man nor woman dared to accuse me of misbehaving myself"; and she reacted similarly to the news that she had been transferred to the authority of a new superior: "I said (my Welsh blood being up again) "Do you think I am a dog, or an animal, to make me over? I have a will of my own".[lxvii]

Certainly there is evidence that Nightingale could be high-handed with subordinates - and Cadwaladyr declared that she had disliked Nightingale from the moment she first heard her name. The point to be made here, however, is that Cadwaladyr's resentment at behaviour she regarded as arrogant by someone she did not like and whose authority she rejected is

expressed in terms of her nationality and what she perceives as her national character. Williams's Introduction, which sketches Cadwaladyr's social, religious and cultural background, seems to have a similar purpose, as do the two occurrences of "peculiar" (i.e. individual, unusual) in the Preface to describe Cadwaladyr's personality. Williams attributes this individuality to the influence of Cadwaladyr's geographical and social origins: "The mountain region which produced her, and the state of society which surrounded her in early life, moulded and impressed upon the native metal the form and stamp which it has never lost".[lxviii] Tellingly, Cadwaladyr's personality is seen in terms of a hard unyielding metal (possibly with an implied pun on 'mettle'); only the strongest force is capable of making an impression on its surface but, once made, the impression remains for ever.

Conclusion

As suggested earlier, Williams's life was one in which borders and boundaries appeared and reappeared; one consequence of a border or boundary is that which side of the border one is situated on becomes an obvious and inescapable fact, and may involve a conscious choice. Williams's family background and early life saw the crossings and re-crossings of geographical, social, financial, cultural and linguistic borders; friendship with Hall enabled her to cross others. When she moved back to Chelsea in 1855 she saw herself, in the letter quoted earlier, as returning to her "native air"; at that time she had not lived in London for more than thirty years, and her letters suggest that she did not visit it until a few months before she moved.

In one sense her reference to her "native air" suggests the same awareness of her personal and family roots as did Cadwaladyr's description of herself as "of Bala" forty years after she had stopped living there; the difference was that whereas Cadwaladyr's sense of her own national

identity seems to have been strengthened by her experience of travel to other countries, Williams had moved away from her original English national identity in many ways. Williams's experiences of, and in, Wales had led her to emphasise her Welsh family roots and to identify strongly with Welsh society, language, literature, history and political concerns, as *Artegall* and her biography of Carnhuanawc show; in the first her intention to remain an impartial interpreter of Wales had moved into partisanship, and in the second she was able to write an account of a Welsh life from a position inside Welsh society, language and culture. The *Autobiography*, although all the work for it was done in London, marks her arrival at a different, and even more complex, place in relation to Welsh identity. Its Introduction shows her again as a knowledgeable interpreter of Welsh society and culture, while the Autobiography itself offers a sustained exercise in the adoption of the voice and personality of a woman who was indubitably and unmistakeably Welsh, and for whom her Welshness was an essential part of her personal identity. Williams's own position was again in the territory of "both/and".

Two questions arise in any consideration of Williams's relation to Wales at this point in her life; where did she feel she belonged, and where did she want to belong? Her decision to move back to London and her pleasure at returning to her "native air" suggest an impulse in one direction; the fact that she was able to write from inside Welsh culture and society in *Artegall* and her biography of Carnhuanawc, and her ability to ventriloquise a Welshwoman so successfully in the Autobiography suggest another. The move to London, however, marked a watershed not only in her life but in her writing. Her three books after she had been drawn into the Llanover circle show her engaging with flesh-and-blood Welsh people whom she knew personally (Carnhuanawc and Cadwaladyr) and with the burning issue of the day which affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of flesh-and-blood Welsh people (*Artegall*); by contrast, her later books used (frequently antiquarian) documents as their

sources. Writing as a Welshwoman, as she did when ventriloquizing Cadwaladyr, was the nearest Williams came to achieving an unequivocal expression of Welsh identity, but the narrative in which she did this is surrounded by reminders that its author was not its unequivocally Welsh subject. Williams herself was still in the far more complex borderlands.

Notes

i NLW MSS 26/9.

ii RLF MS, p. 5.

iii This information was provided orally by the Archivist, Powys County Archives (26/11/08).

iv NLW MS 26/9, 23 March 1854.

v On Edward Williams's death certificate (he died on 17 August 1875, aged 59), the primary cause of death is given as "Chronic alcoholism", diagnosed three years previously; the secondary causes (jaundice and uraemia) appeared in the last four days of his life and are typical of conditions in the final stages of deaths from alcoholism. Information from the death certificate, therefore, suggests that without alcoholism Edward could have enjoyed good health; in this case it would typically have taken years of heavy drinking for his physical system to be so completely undermined.

vi Peter Whitfield, *London: a Life in* Maps (London: The British Library, 2006), pp. 96-97.

vii Barbara Denny, *Chelsea Past* (London: Historical Publications, 1996), pp. 92-100, 61, 64; see Fraser (1986).

viii RLF MS, pp. 7-8.

ix LD FNM 003, p. 10.

x Jane Williams (1987), p. 153.

xi Ibid, p. 171.

xii Ibid, p. 202.

xiii See, for example, Tonn MSS 3.109A (letter 45, undated, 1848, Hall to Archdeacon Williams of Cardigan), and NLW MSS 26/9, 19 Nov. and 2 Dec., 1851 (Williams to

Elizabeth Marsh).

xiv Most of the records of Hurst and Blackett, who published the *Autobiography*, were destroyed by enemy action during World War II (information from Jean Rose, Archivist of the Random House Group, which took over Hurst and Blackett from Hutchinson; 16/06/09).

xv Jane Williams (1857), I, p. 5.

xvi Quoted in Clinton Machann, *The Genre of Victorian Autobiography in Victorian Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 3.

xvii Jane Williams (1857), I, p. 4; 1987 edn, p. xxxiii.

xviii Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition,* trans. by Valentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 102-03.

xix Mikhail Bakhtin, ' Freudianism: A Critical Sketch', (1927), trans. by I. R. Titurin, in *The Bakhtin Reader,* ed. by Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), pp. 170-71.

xx Irenusz Opacki, 'Royal Genres', in *Modern Genre Theory,* ed. by David Duff (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 123-24.

xxi Martin Hewitt, 'Diary, Autobiography and the Practice of Life History' in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture,* ed. by David Amigoni (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 23; Linda H. Peterson, *Traditions of Victorian Women's Autobiography: the Poetics and Politics of Life Writing* (Charlottesville; London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. x; Leigh Gilmore, *Autbiographics: a Feminist Theory of Women's Self-representation* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 35; Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Traditions of Women's Autobiography: from Antiquity to the Present* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. vii.

xxii Jelinek, p. 4.

xxiii Quoted in Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (London: The Women's Press, 1989), p. 28; quoted in Hermione Lee, *On biography: a very short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 7.

xxiv Stuart Miller, *The picaresque novel* (Cleveland; London: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1967), p. 13.

xxv "Traduit d'Allemand de M. le Docteur Ralph, avec les additions qu'on a trouvées de la poche du Docteur lorsqu'il mourut à Minden, l'An de Grâce 1759": Voltaire, *Candide, ou, l'Optimisme,* ed. by Michel Charpentier (Paris: Fernard Nathan, 1984), p. 13.

xxvi Daniel Defoe, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the famous Moll Flanders* Letchworth: J. M. Dent, 1969 edn), p. 1.

xxvii Uspensky, pp. 105, 137.

xxviii Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London; New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 3.

xxix Ibid, pp. 37-38.

xxx Bakhtin, p. 172.

xxxi Valerie Sanders, ' " House of Disquiet"; the Benson family Auto/biographies' and Martin Hewitt, 'Diary, Autobiography and the Practice of Life History', both in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, ed. by David Amigoni (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 5, 21.

xxxii Jane Williams (1987), p. 202.

xxxiii Peterson, p. 29.

xxxiv Quoted in Sanders, p. 7.

xxxv Jane Williams (1987), p. 15.

xxxvi Ibid, pp. 153-4.

xxxvii Ibid, p. 202.

xxxviii Sanders, p. 219; Elizabeth Jay, 'What does a Victorian woman have to do to "get a life" ?', in *Representing Victorian Lives*, ed. by Martin Hewitt (Leeds: Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 1999), pp. 2-10.

xxxix Gilmore, pp. 4, xiii.

xl Sanders, pp. 11, 59; Jelinek, p. 52.

xli Jelinek, p. 53.

xlii Jane Williams (1987), pp. 33, 56, 78, 106.

xliii Bakhtin, pp. 184-85.

xliv Rimmon-Kenan, pp. 53-56.

xlv Ibid, p. 121.

xlvi Jane Williams (1857), I, p. 87.

xlvii Jane Williams (1987), p. 82.

xlviii Ibid, p. 130.

xlix Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 edn), p. xxxv.

l Jane Williams (1987), pp. 163, 201, 200. Mark Bostridge, (*Florence Nightingale: the Woman and the Legend*, London: Viking, 2008, p. 237), records that the group of nurses which included Cadwaladyr had been sent from London without Nightingale's knowledge and that "not only were their services not required, there was no room to accommodate them".

li Bostridge, p. 244; Cecil Woodham-Smith, *Florence Nightingale 1820-1910* (London: Constable, repr. 1972), pp. 226-27.

lii Bostridge, p. 269.

liii Jane Williams (1987), p. 192.

liv David Amigoni, 'Introduction', in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture,* ed. by David Amigoni (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 2.

lv Rimmon-Kenan, pp. 127-29.

lvi John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography: Studies in the First Person Singular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 290.

lvii Machann, p. 8; Gilmore, p. 47.

lviii Burnett (1974), p. 10.

lix Ibid, p, 13.

lx Jane Williams (1987), p. 170.

lxi Graham Pechey, *Mikhail Bahktin: the word in the world* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 29.

lxii NLW MS 26/9; 20, 21 Feb., 7, 9 March 1854 (Williams to Elizabeth Marsh) and 6 Sept. 1852 (Professor Clint to Hall).

lxiii The Modernist Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, who created multiple literary personae for himself, used a similar metaphor: "Life is a skein of yarn which someone has entangled" (A vida é um novelo que alguém emaranhou: Fernando Pessoa, *The Selected Poems*, trans. by Richard Zenith (New York, Grove Press, 2002), p. 287. In fact the Portuguese sentence is capable of a wider range of meanings, since *novelo* can also refer to 'a confused jumble, a mess', and *emaranhar* can also be translated as 'to complicate, make intricate'; see *Novo Michaelis: Dicionário Ilustrado* Vol. II (São Paulo: Comp. Melhoramentos, 1985 edn.), pp. 892, 472. Given the fondness for plays on words which Pessoa demonstrated in his various personae (he gave this epigram to one of his heteronyms, Bernardo Soares), the closeness of form of *novelo* and *novela* (a

novel) is unlikely to be coincidental.

lxiv Jane Williams (1857), I, p. 4.

lxv LD FNM 003, p. 10.

lxvi Jane Williams (1987), p. 55.

lxvii Both ibid, p. 164.

lxviii Jane Williams (1857), I, p. 5.

CHAPTER 6

Literary Women and the expansion of Englishness

The three previous chapters have examined the books which Williams produced under the aegis - and in many ways, the influence - of Hall and the Llanover circle, and the ways in which this influence combined with her acquired knowledge of Welsh history, language and literature, and her personal experience of Welsh culture and society, to focus and strengthen her creation of a sense of Welsh identity. They have also demonstrated that, while the three books they discussed show Williams becoming increasingly embedded in Welsh culture - to the point when she was able successfully to ventriloquize a Welsh-speaking Welsh woman - that sense of Welsh identity could never be single-stranded, and her position in relation to Wales could never be unequivocal. Even in these three books, in which she came closest to a position of literary Welsh identity, her work demonstrates "the sense of 'betwixt and between', of being 'here and there' [simultaneously]" which Dawson and Johnston identified as characteristic of cultural and psychological liminality (discussed in Chapter 1). A constant awareness of her English birth, upbringing, education and points of reference meant that her position in relation to Welsh identity could not help but be conflicted; to adapt Bryan Mason Davies's epigram (quoted in Chapter 1), it would always be true to say of her that Offa's Dyke was within her (Ynddi yr oedd y clawdd).

Her next piece of writing, the subject of this chapter, marked a new departure. *The Literary Women of England; including a Biographical Epitome of all the Most Eminent to the year 1700, and Sketches of the Poetesses to the year 1850: with Extracts from their Works, and Critical Remarks* (1861) has a very different focus from her three previous ('Welsh') books.

Its focus is not only different, but wider both temporally and in its range of subjects; whereas *Artegall* had responded to recent official reports and her books on Carnhuanawc and Betsy Cadwaladyr had dealt with the life-span of their subjects, *The Literary Women of England* surveyed women's literacy and writing over more than a thousand years; and whereas *Artegall* was mainly concerned with the three Commissioners who had written the Reports and the Welsh people whose lives the Reports affected, and her books on Carnhuanawc and Cadwaladyr had each put its subject centre stage, *The Literary Women of England* gave accounts of the lives and work of one hundred and eight women, some of whom came from Wales, Scotland, Ireland and medieval Germany but most of whom were Englishwomen who had lived in England.

In the context of Williams's authorial career, therefore, *The Literary Women of England* marks more than a deviation from the trajectory marked out in her previous three books; it seems to represent a new start on a much wider - British, London-based - stage. Her Introduction shows that the book was very deliberately planned to fill a gap in the market. It explains that she had consulted a number of books on women's writing in Britain (by Sir Egerton Brydges, George Craik, George Ballard and John Duncombe, among other eighteenth-century writers) as well as a range of encyclopaedias and reference books, but had been unable to discover "any systematic work, either succinct or voluminous…[on] the condensed or arranged lives and writings of literary Englishwomen from the Heptarchy to the year 1850"; she hoped that her own book would be followed by "a uniform reprint of the best works of our English authoresses", so that it would not only become the standard work but begin the process of literary recovery.[i]

Other comments in the Introduction suggest that she had identified a further, more specialised, niche in the market; *The Literary Women of England* was to be a book for girls

which would simultaneously encourage an interest in women's writing and offer examples to emulate, since the "peculiar charm" of "the records of our choicest women's lives and thoughts" could "shape [young girls'] yet ductile natures after the noblest models".[ii] To write the standard text for this readership would open up a potentially lucrative market, but to reach this target audience it would also have to be acceptable to those who controlled teenage girls' access to reading-matter: their parents, guardians and teachers. Only if the book gained the approval of these gate-keepers would it achieve the popularity (and sales) she hoped for it, as a book appropriate for a school prize or a present from well-intentioned friends and relatives. As a result, the book is aimed at two contrasting readerships - the teenage girls and the gate-keepers - who had different interests and priorities; in addition, it gave Williams the opportunity to expound on her own literary interests and *bêtes-noirs.* Given the unresolved tension between these elements, it is perhaps not surprising that the book lacks a clear central focus and did not become a commercial success. It does, however, make explicit Williams's views on women's position in society and the world of literature, and show her taking up a new position in relation to Welsh identity; this chapter will examine both of these topics.

Felicia Hemans and the genesis of 'The Literary Women of England'

In her Introduction, Williams explains that the book's starting-point was her intention "to write a Critical and Biographical Essay" on the life and work of Felicia Hemans, but that her preparatory work had made her aware of the lack of a history of women's writing and that she "enlarge[d] [her] plan" accordingly (original emphasis).[iii] Almost one-fifth of the book (110 of its 564 pages) is devoted to Hemans's work, and such disproportionate attention to a single writer inevitably unbalances the book's contents and fundamentally undermines its avowed ambition to provide a general historical survey of women's writing. Further,

Williams explains that "[i]n order to leave with the reader a favourable impression of the Literary Women of England" she decided to end the book with a poem by Hemans: 166 lines on 'Despondency and Aspiration'.[iv] Williams's choice of material to end her books frequently represents the lasting impression she wished to remain with her readers on the subject (the final sections of her biography of Carnhuanawc and the final poem in *Celtic Fables* are cases in point), and the statement in her closing sentence of *The Literary Women of England* that 'Despondency and Aspiration' "has been reserved for this place" makes it clear that here also she had chosen her book's ending very deliberately - a choice which implies that Hemans's work was the apogee of women's writing in the thousand years covered by the book, and that it represented the most dazzling possible example of female literary achievement.[v]

Both the disproportionate prominence given to Hemans and the way in which Williams allows it to dislocate a more measured and balanced account of "the general progress of female literature in England" reveal much about the ways in which Williams presented herself as a woman writer and how she positioned herself in relation to Wales, and I wish to consider *The Literary Women of England* through the prism of Williams's treatment of Hemans. The iconic status which Hemans and her work had achieved allowed Williams to present her as a model acceptable both to her younger readers and their adult gate-keepers, while the remarkable similarities between the lives of the two women provide a revealing counterpoint to Williams's own relation to Wales during this period.

Learned women and Williams's approach to her younger readers

Public attitudes to learned and literary women have always been contingent on socially- and politically-determined views on the properties of an admirable woman. Harriet Guest has identified a movement towards the middle of the eighteenth century in Britain which

celebrated female learning and scholarly accomplishments, exemplified by the work of Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Carter.[vi] John Duncombe's patriotic assertion in *The Feminiad* (1754) that "British nymphs", able to "rove/At Freedom's call, thro' Wisdom's sacred grove", were vastly superior to "nymphs" from anywhere else, and George Ballard's declaration (1752) that "it is pretty certain that England hath produced more women famous for literary accomplishments than any other nation in Europe" show patriotic pride in educated Englishwomen.[vii] Towards the end of the century, however, attitudes changed, at least partly because of the effects of political and military anxiety about, and later war against, revolutionary France. Linda Colley has argued that in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth a new form of British patriotism required that whatever were the perceived qualities of Frenchwomen, British women had to possess the exact opposite.[viii] Some writers of the period hinted darkly that the prominence of women in public life in imperial Rome had been a major cause of the decline of Roman civilisation into barbarism, and that in order to prevent Britain suffering a similar fate, British women should retire to the home and live in demure domestic - and relatively uneducated - obscurity.[ix]

Certainly by the 1840s and 1850s a few voices argued that women should have greater educational opportunities: for example, an essay by Margaret Mylne in the *Westminster Review* in 1841, and an article in the first issue of the *English Women's Journal* in 1858 which pointed out that limited female education prevented women from gaining financial independence by earning their own livings.[x] Unless Williams's younger readers had unusually enlightened parents and teachers, however, any ambitions they might have to develop their intellectual interests were likely to face severe restrictions, if not outright prohibition. Her response was to show women writers who, when girls, had faced similar difficulties but had triumphantly overcome them. Her examples included Laetitia Barbauld, whose father

"cherished the ordinary prejudice against learned women" but who finally gave in to "her urgent entreaties" and acknowledged "her masculine capacity for study": Hannah More, whose father was also "alarmed…lest she should become that dreaded monster a learned woman" but who was eventually persuaded by "his less prejudiced wife" to allow their daughter to continue her studies: and Anna Seward, whose father at first refused to allow her to read literature, requiring her instead to spend her time in "strictly feminine accomplishments…especially ornamental needlework" but finally withdrew his veto after his daughter agreed to give up her "first love", apparently as some sort of consolation prize.[xi] Williams's choice of vocabulary invites her readers to mock the "prejudice[d]" fathers who regarded an educated woman as either an honorary male (since a capacity for study was a "masculine" characteristic) or "a dreaded monster" and, while it warns that the emotional cost can be high (Seward had had to give up her "first love") it tells them that persistence will win in the end. Examples such as these would have heartened her teenage readers (since the writers who pitted their wills against those of their fathers had seen their determination vindicated by their later stellar literary careers) but were less likely to recommend themselves to the girls' adult gate-keepers, who saw their surrogates not only mocked and challenged, but shown to be fallible in judgement. Hemans, it should be noted, had received an excellent education - French, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian from her mother, Latin from the local vicar, and later German - and "loved books as she loved the fresh air and sunshine", but this was "under the judicious instruction of her mother".[xii] Her father's opinion of this is not discussed (and Williams tactfully omits to mention that he later left his family and disappeared to Canada).[xiii] Williams, does, however, show Hemans, like Barbauld, More and Seward, suffering from the guidance of a male authority-figure who felt he knew more about writing her poetry than she did; when Hemans showed her draft of 'Superstition and Revelation' to Bishop Reginald Heber "he drew up a paper of suggestions for a far more

ambitious work, whose magnitude seems to have overawed her mind and deterred her from making any further efforts for its completion". Williams's description of the posthumously published "fragment" as "musical, flexible and expressive" indicates her strong support for Hemans's original conception of the poem; her account of the anecdote implies that there are occasions when literary women know better than the men around them and should ignore male advice, even if proffered by a bishop.[xiv] It was a message likely to win favour with her younger readers, and perhaps provide them with ammunition when faced with intransigent parents; before they could have the opportunity to read of such women, however, the book had to pass the familial censors, and therefore it was necessary to allay parental concerns as to its social and moral acceptability.

Williams's approach to the adult gate-keepers

One of Williams's methods to reassure parents and teachers was by emphasising the social usefulness of female education; she cites the example of Elizabeth Carter, whose study of Latin and Classical Greek enabled her not only to produce her much-praised translation of Epicetus (and thus "confer…social benefits" on her readers) but to tutor her youngest brother in preparation for his entrance exams to Cambridge, with the result that he not only "passed through his course of study with distinction" but eventually became an Anglican vicar. Since Carter's mind in childhood was "dull and slow of apprehension" and the secret of her later intellectual and literary eminence was "resolute and indefatigable perseverance", her life offered a splendid example of the results of hard work and determination - exactly the message which parents and teachers would wish their charges to take to heart.[xv] Hannah More provided another sterling example, both by the social usefulness which could result from study ("the good [her tracts] did was incalculable") and by the fact that she did not

begin to "apply herself seriously" to study until she was twenty-one, which parents could use to urge their recalcitrant offspring that it was never too late to start.[xvi] Accounts of other authors emphasise the specifically religious purpose of their writings: for example, Lady Jane Grey, Jane Taylor and Mary-Jane Jewsbury.[xvii] Parents could feel confident that their educated daughters could be good as well as clever.

Parents could gain further reassurance from Williams's emphasis on her subjects' devotion to their families and domestic duties: Hannah Cowley's "happiness was in her home"; Anna Seward, "knowing her society to be indispensable to her parents' happiness, resolved never to leave them"; while on the death of her stepmother, Elizabeth Carter bought a house from her literary earnings, installed her father there, and "provided in the most minute particulars for his hourly comfort".[xviii] Such dutiful daughters of course grew up to be dutiful wives and mothers: Catherine Cockburn "devoted her fine faculties to the solace of her husband and to the education of her children", while Anne Hunter, whose "natural talents had been assiduously improved by education…delighted in devoting them to the sacred purpose of soothing and gladdening her husband's toil-worn spirit".[xix] Hemans had been prevented from demonstrating her wifely virtues by her husband's sudden decampment to Italy, but the tone

and content of her poetry, and her devotion to her sons' welfare, stood as ample testimony to her whole-hearted acceptance of "the sacred purpose" of her marital and maternal roles.

The message was essentially the same as that which Roland Barthes identified in a photograph in the magazine *Elle* in the 1950s which showed seventy French women novelists and recorded the number of their children and novels (in that order) after the name of each one: that the 'natural' purpose of a woman's existence is to bear children, that authorship must be a secondary female activity, and that "the aura of motherhood lends the Muse, who is

sometimes regarded as a little wanton, the guarantee of respectability and the sweetly affecting setting of the nursery" (le mythe de la natalité prête à la Muse, de reputation un peu légère, la caution de la respectabilité, le décor touchant de la nursery).[xx] *The Literary Women of England* assured parents that education would equip their daughters to become better wives and mothers, while for single women whose parents were dead and who had no unmarried male relatives who needed housekeepers, their education enabled them to be useful to the community in which they lived: Jane Taylor "gave herself up…to nurse the sick, to teach poor children and to make herself useful among her friends…pursuing meanwhile her literary occupations whenever health and leisure allowed".[xxi] Williams's message to parents and teachers was clear: Taylor might be well educated, but she retained a clear sense of the socially-appropriate priorities.

How to be married though educated

As suggested above, while Williams's concern was to offer her younger readership inspiring examples of successful educated women she was also very aware of the need to include material which would reassure to their parents, and sometimes the interests of these two groups were at variance. One concern was likely to unite daughters and parents, however: the fear that education and literary interests might make young girls unattractive and unmarriageable. Hemans again presented an encouraging example, since all who knew her "felt the attractive and attaching spell of her beauty and genius" and she married at eighteen; but so many of Williams's other subjects are also described as "beautiful" (for example, Lady Jane Grey, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, and Catherine Cockburn) that it comes close to being presented as a necessary concomitant to female authorship, and the sharper description of one writer (Anna Williams) as "a woman of plain appearance and irritable temper" appears

refreshingly honest.[xxii] This attention to her subjects' appearance not only asserted that beauty and learning can co-exist, it also reinforced the message that however gifted and learned a woman might be, attracting and keeping the male gaze was a social necessity. Williams offered her readers the reassurance that it was possible for a woman to be learned, literary, **and** happily married: "the greater number of these literary Englishwomen were married, and many of them more than once; from which it would appear that their mental pursuits had not weakened their domestic affections", she declared triumphantly at the end of her general survey of female authors writing before 1700.[xxiii]

Publication and the loss of social status

One of Williams's major aims in writing *The Literary Women of England* was to inspire girls to read and study by presenting them with examples of women in previous ages who had done so successfully; another was to empower them to think of themselves, also, as potential authors. The book's very existence was proof that a woman could become a published author, but in case the point was not sufficiently clear Williams told her readers a personal anecdote:

> The simple name of a nursery-book, 'Aunt Mary's Tales for her Nieces', or some other, has ere now, taught a thoughtful child to infer - Then a woman could write and publish what she has seen and known; and why should not I, when I grow up, do the like? …and thus I am encouraged to attend, to observe, and to investigate.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1861, pp. 366-67)

Williams used the first person singular to represent her own persona very rarely in her prose works (even in her account of the childhood game which she and her siblings devised) and examples of personal reminiscences are even rarer in her work.[xxiv] Its inclusion here suggests not only that she wished to remind her readers that the book they were reading had been

written by a woman, but that she wanted them to consider the possibility of authorship for themselves. She would have known well, however, that for a woman to study, read and write for herself or for her immediate circle, was one thing; writing for publication was another.

The view, frequently expressed in the period when Williams was writing *The Literary Women of England*, that respectable middle-class women should remain in the domestic, 'private sphere', and avoid the wider arena of the male 'public' sphere, would not have been expressed so frequently or so forcefully if a significant number of women had not refused to confine themselves to house and home. However, power to form and influence public opinion was traditionally held by those convinced that women's natural, God-given role was to inhabit the private sphere of the home and to act as guardians of private morality; their response to women who stepped into the public arena as authors could be vitriolic. Williams knew this at first hand: a review of *The Literary Women of England* in *The Examiner*, an influential and widely-circulated London-based journal of the period, made it clear from the outset that in the opinion of the reviewer the book was unnecessary and its subject irrelevant:

> Literature is not the best business for a woman…[Women] have been wisest when they are content to have used their skills in other and more fitting ways. So it has been from the beginning…Large-hearted women can confer the greatest benefit upon their age when they are content unobtrusively to help others instead of seeking literary reputation for themselves. [Most] studious women have wisely preferred to exercise their influence quietly in the training up of their children, and in the cultivation of refined thoughts within their own friendly circle.
>
> (*The Examiner*, September 21, 1861)

To the (probably male) reviewer, women who entered "the business" of literature by publishing their writing - and, even more egregiously, "seek[ing] literary reputation" by so doing - were rejecting their 'natural' role of a lifetime of "unobtrusive" and "quiet" service to

others within the constraints of their domestic lives; further, it was taken for granted that this role was divinely ordained ("So it was in the beginning" echoes the formula which ends many psalms in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer). To the reviewer - and presumably to many readers - it was incontrovertible that both the female author of the book under review and the female authors who were its subjects had made a distasteful and lamentable error in writing for publication, that inevitably they had done it badly, and that the fact that they had even attempted to do it showed their lack of wisdom and propriety in failing to understand their place in the natural, intellectual, moral and social order.

Since writing for publication entailed such a drastic loss of status, only women under the threat of dire financial necessity could engage acceptably in this sort of paid employment, and had to be ready to take the consequences: "If a woman is engaged in paid work, she ceases to be a lady", declared Sarah Stickney Ellis, a prolific author of the 1840s and 1850s on 'woman's place' (who presumably exempted herself from her own strictures).[xxv] Hemans was one of the few female writers to escape this opprobrium, and this suggests an additional reason for the special treatment she receives in *The Literary Women of England*. She was exceptional on two grounds: firstly, her poetry celebrated the virtues of hearth and home - one of her early volumes even bore the reassuring title *The Domestic Affections.* The second reason lay in her domestic situation, which provided her with a socially-acceptable reason for engaging in the sordid "business" of writing for paid publication; she had been deserted by her husband shortly before the birth of their fifth son and needed the income from her writing to support herself and her children and provide for their education.[xxvi] Writing for publication could therefore be seen as an extension of her maternal role - the very definition of femininity - rather than as personal ambition for fame or fortune. It is not surprising that *The Examiner*'s reviewer quoted approvingly from lines by Hemans which asserted that a woman's "crown of

glory" resided in "the paradise/Of home with all its loves", and exempted her from his general criticism of female authors.

Unsurprisingly, Williams, whose own personal history had included an almost catastrophic descent in social class, shows herself particularly sensitive to parental fears for daughters who engaged in the sordid activity of writing for publication, observing that in the early years of the nineteenth century "the prevalence of female authorship in the middle classes had provoked aristocratic prejudice against it, and high-born women were considered to degrade themselves when assuming the position of those whom circumstances subjected to their patronage".[xxvii] This interestingly reflects aristocratic fears of the greater social mobility made possible by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the new class of industrialists and entrepreneurs; anything which led to greater fluidity of the boundaries between social classes was to be prevented if at all possible. Conventionally, a female aristocrat's role in the production of literature was to signal her public approval of a book by allowing it to be dedicated to her, and possibly by recommending it to her friends. Writing for publication herself - and therefore exposing her work to the harsh realities of the literary world and its marketplace - not only took her out of the private sphere which was her rightful place as a woman, but was felt to 'degrade' her socially (and, by extension her family) by involving her in 'trade'. Williams's response to this problem was to include a large number of aristocratic and royal women of previous centuries, and to emphasise the morality - and, often, the piety - of what they wrote; since their social position meant that they did not need to write for money, their literary activities could be presented as performing a public service. Writing by women which did not inculcate piety and morality, however, had no such defence.

Immoral literature and the 'obscene' Aphra Behn

A major concern of the parents whom Williams needed to convince of the book's suitability for their daughters was the fact that the world of literature was frequently felt to lack moral probity, and might inculcate ideas which undermined the importance of female social, and especially sexual, conformity. Novels and plays were regarded as especially dangerous in this respect: Sarah Prescott's comments on the "sexualised image" of female novelists of the early eighteenth century have already been noted, and much of the nineteenth-century debate on reading-matter appropriate for women centred on the potentially damaging effects on their attitudes to their familial and domestic duties which novel-reading encouraged.[xxviii] Belinda Jack notes that lists of teachers' reports on the reading-matter provided for transported female convicts on the voyage to Australia included "travel, history, religion and serious poetry" but no "novels, plays, or other improper books".[xxix] Williams's decision to end her account of women's writing in general in 1700 means she avoided having to discuss the notable female novelists of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; this also obviated the need to discuss the views on female education and social rights - dangerously subversive, in the view of her young readers' gatekeepers - of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Astell (Astell, interestingly, has a substantial entry in Ballard).[xxx] When post-1700 poets had also written novels or plays, Williams mentions these almost as an afterthought; she discusses the poems of the dramatist Hannah Cowley while giving very little attention to her plays, and after introducing Charlotte Smith as "the poet" says very little about her successful novels.[xxxi]

Novelists and playwrights before 1700 whose work could not be ignored were judged according to a strict scale of morality; Williams emphasised their piety and virtue when this was feasible and presented their literary weaknesses as inextricably linked to their moral failings when it was not. For an account of women writers which aimed to reassure parents and teachers as to the essential morality of literature, writing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries presented a serious problem. Williams's response was to devote a

considerable number of pages to minor writers of the period, especially if they had aristocratic or court connections (the Ladies Pakington, Fanshawe, Gethin and Halkin),[xxxii] and to present Susannah Centlivre and Delarivier Manley as possessing literary talents corrupted by the immorality of their age; Centlivre's comedies possessed "cleverness and wit, though strongly tinctured with the indelicacy of her time", while although Manley's "talents undoubtedly were versatile and engaging", none of her "disgraceful…productions have lived or deserve to live".[xxxiii]

No such positive (although misdirected) qualities are attributed to Aphra Behn, however. Jane Spencer has shown how attitudes to Behn moved from regarding her as an enabling model for women writers in the seventeenth century to the subject of severe moral condemnation later, and argues that to writers of the late eighteenth century Behn remained "a representative of female rebelliousness that needed to be suppressed to make way for the incorporation into the [English literary] tradition of the authority of sentimental femininity".[xxxiv] Female rebelliousness was exactly the quality which many parents and teachers feared would be encouraged by female access to education and literature; it is not surprising that Williams would wish to present Behn as negatively as possible. Her sources had certainly approached Behn's life and work with moral disdain because of its perceived sexual depravity; Duncombe's verdict was that "Nor genuine wit nor harmony excuse/The dangerous sallies of a wanton Muse", while Brydges referred disparaging to the "vicious fire" of Behn's poems (Craik and Ballard avoided the problem by ignoring Behn completely).[xxxv]

Williams was at pains to make it clear that she did not include Behn by choice; "[Behn's] name would have been excluded from all mention in these pages, had it not been necessary to mark the true state of female literature at this period". Her descriptions of Behn and her work move through increasingly negative terms, from leading "a gay, perhaps licentious, life" (in

which both "gay" and "perhaps" suggest a degree of amused tolerance), through "the licentious indelicacy of [Behn's] lively writings" (a more negative description, balanced by the positive connotations of "lively"), to the unequivocal statement "Aphara [sic] Behn is the first English authoress upon record whose life was openly wrong and whose writings were obscene".[xxxvi] Williams's increasingly negative vocabulary suggests that while her own response may have been one which tempered moral disapproval with enjoyment of the "ga[it]y" and "livel[iness]" of Behn's writing, she was very aware that as far as protective parents and teachers were concerned Behn was an irrecoverably notorious figure, and that in order to reassure them that her own book was morally unimpeachable it would be better to condemn too much than not enough.

The censorious stance towards Restoration literature which Williams assumes here makes for interesting reading when set beside a poem she composed in 1851 while staying at Llanover Court; the circumstances are described in a letter from Williams to her aunt which was based on her diary entries.[xxxvii] After she had impressed the house-party with an impromptu poem Lord Torrington, another of the guests, had "entreated [her] to write his character in verse", and she produced it the following day. The diary entries for the previous weeks reveal her changing attitude to Torrington; his reputation as a rake and libertine had gone before him, and her initial response when they met was that he was "an affable fool" unable to exert "self-government; unwise were they who sent him to govern Ceylon!" Over the following days, however, her attitude changed; she described him as "very chatty and agreeable", "full of fun and lively anecdotes" and "irresistibly droll", and was clearly flattered that he continually sought out her company: "Lady H[all] says that I shall be [his] head favourite before he goes". The verse she produced in response to his request was brief and pointed:

Perchance this pencil might not greatly err
Should it compare thee to a Rochester;

Thy social grace, wit, pleasantry and whim
In gay profanity resemble him:
May favouring Time the parallel pursue
And send, some happy day, thy Burnet too!

While many of Rochester's poems remained unpublished during this period, her reference to him shows that she was familiar not only with his reputation but with the facts of his life; her letter explicitly refers to Bishop Burnet as "the means of converting Lord Rochester". Her attitude to Rochester and Torrington is made clear in the third and fourth lines of the poem, in which only "profanity" carries negative connotations; as her diary entries reveal, she - entirely unconsciously - found him very attractive. A poem on the incident by another guest, Sydney Owenson Lady Morgan (who seems to have made a habit of drawing attention to subjects which everyone else was sedulously avoiding) compares Williams and Torrington respectively to "a Saint" and "a Demon" and observes that their conversation "left it little in doubt that with each other each was charmed". An amused and relaxed attitude towards a poet generally regarded as one of the most 'licentious' and 'obscene' in English literature was clearly entirely acceptable within the sophisticated literary and social circle at Llanover; it was emphatically not appropriate in a book directed at impressionable young girls whose parents had to be assured that it would support, rather than endanger, their moral welfare.

Men on the promontory, women in the cave

In one obvious respect, of course, Behn's life and work would always be judged by different criteria from Rochester's; behaviour - and writing - which might be permissible in a charmingly louche man was completely reprehensible in a woman. As a single woman on a low income who needed to safeguard a reputation for conspicuous respectability, and who

was also a writer who specialised in subjects conventionally considered the province of male authors, Williams was very aware of the difficulties and constraints of her position. A passage in the Introduction to *The Literary Women of England* is the only point in her body of work at which she discusses the limitations which social attitudes would inevitably impose on her young female readers if, like her and the subjects of her book, they wrote for publication:

> Men stand, as it were, upon a promontory, commanding extensive views, and open to immediate impulses from all above, below and around them. Women sit like genii of secluded caves, receiving echoes, and communicating mere reverberations from the outer world, but not without their own pure springs and rills, tinkling soft music and fraught with peculiar efficacy.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1861, pp. 2-3)

These sentences make their point through a series of binary opposites. Men's place is outside in the open air, while women's place is inside, in caves; men are high up on a promontory, while women in their caves are by implication below ground level. Men are standing, women are sitting. Men can see everything around them, while women's vision is limited to the interior of the caves. Men's role is active ("commanding"), while women's is passive ("receiving [echoes]"). Men are open to "immediate impulses" and are therefore in direct contact and engagement with the world around them; women, "receiving echoes" in their caves, obtain only second-hand information which may well be distorted, incomplete or confusing. Men on their promontory have "extensive views" and therefore possess a clear line of sight over the surrounding landscape and are able to observe and receive "immediate impulses from all above, below and around them"; women's vision may well be limited to the interior of the caves, but even if they are able to see something of the outside world it is likely to be a small segment only, which may well be unrepresentative. Because of this panoramic

view and clarity of vision, men are able to pass on a clear picture of what they see, feel and hear; women's restricted line of sight and the fact that they receive (possibly distorted) "echoes" and can communicate only through "reverberations" means that the picture they receive will be at best limited and at worst distorted, and that they will not be able to communicate it clearly and effectively to others. The assertion in the last phrase of the second sentence that women have their own life-giving and -sustaining sources which are pure and make their own music ("tinkling soft music") and carry women-specific values and usefulness ("fraught with peculiar efficacy") is presented as a very limited consolation for female disadvantage; the fact that it is not offered as a significant counterweight to male advantage is reflected in its subordinate syntactical status as well as the introductory double negative ("not without") which implies at best limited validity for what is to follow. If the accounts of the "lives, principles and sentiments" of the women writers discussed in the book are to be offered as exemplars to its youthful readers, it also presents them with a grimly realistic view of their (in many ways, marginal) position in Victorian society.

The central image in the passage calls on a wide range of references and allusions. At one level it can be seen as relating clearly to the 'retirement mode' which, although a genre used by male as well as female writers, was particularly associated with women's writing in the later part of the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth. Bronwen Price identifies the key stance of writers in this mode as rejecting worldly values in favour of a simpler mode of existence, usually in a pastoral setting, far removed from a society which was vain, corrupt and primarily motivated by ambition; she argues that this retreat was "implicitly feminised" in that it offered a private space which served a quasi-maternal function of protection, and allowed for "quiet meditation, philosophical reflection, and reassessment of the world outside its secure boundaries".[xxxviii] Perhaps because of this connection with meditation rather than action, it became particularly associated with women's

poetry; Sarah Prescott has shown how female novelists of the period were typically seen as "professional, commercial and as having a sexualised image", while by contrast female poets were portrayed as "modest, virtuous and amateur".[xxxix] She has also shown how, while some aristocratic women writers (for example, Mary Lady Chudleigh and Anne Finch Countess of Winchilsea) and others such as Jane Brereton did indeed emphasise their amateur status and use their 'provincial retirement' as an element in a Horatian model of authorship, other women - less aristocratic and decidedly less amateur - used this image for their own purposes. Prescott identifies Elizabeth Singer Rowe as a particularly clear example of a woman writer whose celebrated provinciality became a key component of her commercial success but who, while maintaining a self-image as non-professional and loftily retired from the madding world's ignoble strife was in fact far more engaged with the world, including with the political and religious issues of the day, than her chosen image implied.[xl]

Given the historic association of the retirement mode with women's writing, therefore, Williams's use in the Introduction of a metaphor of women in retirement carries a great deal of literary, cultural and moral resonance. One of the strongest indications of the positive characteristics she associates with it is carried by the word "genii"; it certainly bears its standard denotation of "a guardian spirit, especially one connected with a particular place", but also, used in the context of "secluded caves", carries connotations from classical history of sibyls and the women who voiced the oracles, which were typically located in remote rocky landscapes and caves near fresh-water springs.[xli] The most notable examples include the Oracle at Delphi (probably the most famous in classical Greece) and the Sibyl at Cumae (the most famous of classical Rome); the Sibyl of Erythrae in modern Turkey was the daughter of a spring and sat on a rock next to the spring her mother to sing the oracles.[xlii] Williams's writings show that she had a wide knowledge of classical history, literature and mythology; *The Literary Women of England* refers to Herodotus, Hesiod, Diodorus Siculus,

Tacitus, Sappho, Aristotle, Horace, Pindar, Miltiades and Themistocles, and the book's opening paragraphs make the explicit point that "women regularly…uttered the oracles at Delphi and Dodona".[xliii] It is therefore highly likely that she had in mind a reference to the metaphor of the cave in Book VII of Plato's *Republic*. In this dialogue Socrates evoked the image of a cave inhabited by men who have been imprisoned there since childhood, chained so that they can look only straight ahead and are able to see only the shadows thrown on the cave wall in front of them by a fire behind them; his point is that the men in the cave would assume that the shadows were reality, and that this image represents "the ignorance and delusion of our human condition".[xliv]

Williams's use of this metaphor in the Introduction to a book about female writers intended for female readers is particularly interesting because conflicted. The women in the caves, of high status (as "genii" and the associations with classical sibyls and oracles demonstrate), are presented as having their own modes of expression, power and means of consolation (the "pure springs and rills" which produce "tinkling soft music, fraught with peculiar efficacy"), but they are inevitably fated to remain apart from the world, just as unable to experience or describe its reality as the men in Plato's cave, receiving only distorted versions of messages from the real world and unable to communicate their responses clearly or intelligibly; women merely voiced the oracles - the inspiration came from the (male) god - and other men interpreted their indistinct words and ambiguous messages. This is not merely a remarkably pessimistic (if grimly realistic) view of the mid-nineteenth-century world to present to her young readers; it also reflects the social and educational obstacles which Williams and the book's subjects had faced and which they had overcome in order to write and publish the works she was discussing.

Williams's literary prejudices

While Williams's her awareness of her two distinct readerships shaped her approach to her subjects, there are also points where she was apparently so engaged - whether favourably or unfavourably - by their writing that she felt impelled to express her own personal opinion of it. Her method of praise is to describe a poem as demonstrating "beauty", "exquisite taste" or "delicacy" (without defining the terms) and then to provide a long quotation from it, as if ending her description with an unanswerable *Quod Erat Demonstrandum*. Her negative verdicts are equally succinct; she shows no respect for Great Writers, for example, ("This, like most of [Pope's] other axioms, is fallacious"), or for Great Englishwomen (of a poem by Elizabeth I: "The tone is heathen, the spirit malevolent").[xlv] Her admiration for Hemans's work, though considerable, was this side idolatry, resulting in stern verdicts such as "[Hemans] had no particular faculty for narration" and the declaration that her verse drama *Sebastian of Portugal* "comes to an untimely end, dying from mere inanity".[xlvi]

She directed especial opprobrium at inaccurate or sloppy English. Anna Seward's biography of Erasmus Darwin, for example, was "not merely inelegant, pedantic and replete with affectation [but] absolutely and daringly ungrammatical. Most of the words are English, but the structure of the sentences belongs to no language living or dead". By contrast, in the writing of which Williams approved, care had been taken "in fitting apt words to apt thoughts [and] in rendering language truthful and clear".[xlvii] In its emphasis on clarity the last sentence is strikingly close to Pope's "True wit is nature to advantage dress'd;/What oft was thought but ne'er so well express'd"; apparently some of his "axioms" were more "fallacious" than others.[xlviii]

Hemans and Williams: degrees of Welshness

Hemans's pervasive presence in *The Literary Women of England* is partly explained by the ways in which Hemans's variety and degree of Welshness made Williams aware of her own. Certainly, the similarities between many aspects of the two women's lives would have made it impossible for her to avoid (at least implicit) comparison. Both had six living siblings (including an elder brother who was an army officer), both had been born in England and had moved to Wales after their fathers "suffered a great reverse of fortune" as Williams said of Hemans.[xlix] Further, both published books of poetry in their teens, both became interested in Welsh history, literature and culture and made use of this in their writing, and both later moved away from Wales to other parts of Britain and never returned to live in the place they had regarded as their Welsh home.

The importance of Hemans's Welsh connections has varied with the standpoint of the observer. The Welsh often claim her as one of their own on the basis of her residence in Wales and early poems such as *Welsh Melodies* (1822 and 1832), and a book is devoted to her in the 'Writers of Wales' series published by the University of Wales Press (although the author's interest in her work seems to have been sparked by her residence in Daventry).[l] However, a recent scholarly edition of her work (by Susan J. Wolfson: 2000 and 2010) contains no references to *Welsh Melodies* in its critical introduction and no extracts from its poems in 470 pages of Hemans's poetry, while the extended essay on Hemans by Emma Mason in 2006 merely refers in passing to Hemans's verses "on the Greeks, Germans, Moors, Norwegians, Spaniards and Welsh".[li] For Williams, however, Hemans seems not merely to have been an admirable poet but an admirable Welsh poet, and her construction of a Welsh identity for Hemans provides a useful perspective on her views of her own Welsh identity.

Williams uses a particularly telling phrase in her account of Hemans's election as "an honorary member of the Royal Cambrian Institution in acknowledgement of the services she

had rendered to the Principality by studying its history and writing words to the national melodies" collected and arranged by John Parry (i.e. in *Welsh Melodies*): Hemans, writes Williams, was "particularly gratified" by this mark of recognition because she "deem[ed] herself a naturalised Welshwoman".[lii] Williams who, as her previously-discussed self-description shows, presented herself as "Welsh by descent and long residence, but born in Chelsea", seems to have seen herself as a Welsh woman who had unfortunately been born outside Wales; Hemans apparently required naturalisation because she had neither a Welsh birthplace *nor* Welsh ancestry. Williams seems to have regarded herself as possessing a higher degree of Welshness than Hemans could aspire to, which enabled her not only to understand fully the sources of Hemans's poetry but also to judge how far Hemans had successfully assimilated an understanding of Welsh literature and culture in her poetry (and perhaps also to envy Hemans the public recognition of her Welshness in her election to the Royal Cambrian Institution).

Williams's precise location of Hemans on a scale of Welshness contrasts particularly strongly with her imprecision in the use of nouns and adjectives indicating nationality in the book as a whole. "England" is sometimes used for "Britain" (Margaret Duchess of Newcastle achieved "a fame yet unrivalled in England or the world") and sometimes not (copies of tracts by Hannah More distributed in "England" are distinguished from those distributed in Wales).[liii] Conversely, "English" is used indiscriminately for "British" (an "English ambassador"), and the possibility that "English poets and novelists" (*passim*) might refer to the language in which they wrote is undermined by the fact that "British novelists" and "British poets" refer to exactly the same groups of writers.[liv] The synonymous use of the two terms is seen most clearly in the statement - remarkable from any writer but especially, given her previous literary career and her concern about her own claims to Welshness, from Williams - that "the British Empire [covers] all the regions ruled by the British tongue".[lv] This statement is even

more extraordinary when set beside her use of "British" for "Welsh"; "the Ancient British Bards [who composed the Triads]" refers to exactly the same group of poets as "the ancient Welsh bards".[lvi] Williams also uses a multiplicity of terms for the country and its people, not only 'Wales' and 'the Principality' (both *passim*), but 'Cymru' and 'the Cymry' (both left untranslated) as well as the adjective 'Cambrian'.[lvii] It is difficult to imagine that at least some of the book's younger readers did not find this multiplicity of terms and references confusing; it certainly suggests lack of clarity in the author's mind. (A similar lack of clarity is present in her choice of the book's title, since far from being 'literary' in the usual sense of the word, some of the women she discusses have left only their autograph or are included because they were patrons of (male) writers, while several had no connection with England or Britain, and did not write in English).

The Literary Women of England also, however, contains a wide range of (less confused) references to Wales and matters Welsh, apparently intended to draw attention to her personal experience and assert her specialist knowledge. They range from geographical descriptions (of the Vale of Clwyd, the Vale of Conwy, "the exquisite scenery around that lovely retreat" [of Talgarth, Breconshire]), and the experience of climbing Cader Idris to watch the sunrise in terms which make it clear that she wrote from personal experience (although not in the first person).[lviii] Her range of Welsh references also includes the historical ("the Druidical priestesses"), the literary (early Welsh poetry, the Triads, and Taliesin's poem on the goddess Ceridwen) and the cultural ("the Eisteddfod, or meeting of Welsh Bards").[lix] She also demonstrates knowledge of a Welsh folk-song (" 'The Torriad y Dydd', the Break of Day, commonly called 'Can [*sic*] y Tylwyth Teg', the fairies' song") and refers to the musician John Parry as "'Bardd Alaw" [Poet of Melody] without offering a translation.[lx] At one point she displays her personal knowledge of Wales in an anecdote of a friend who "showed the writer a landscape done by a clever artist and asked 'What is it?' The question was perplexing, yet

the instantaneous answer chanced to be correct: 'It is Brecknockshire scenery with Devonshire colouring' ".[lxi] The ostensible purpose of the anecdote is to illustrate how "the haze and fog of intervening time cast distorting shadows" on the memories of past events and create "such incongruities" as was demonstrated in the picture of the landscape; the effect is to demonstrate Williams's detailed knowledge of the Welsh countryside.[lxii]

Some of these Welsh references seem to have been made for herself rather than for her readers, and are certainly not relevant to the point she is making (for example, the visual impression created by sunrise on Cader Idris and the characteristics of Breconshire scenery) and their presence may indicate a need to remind herself as well as her readers that she still considered herself Welsh although she had made her home in England. The idyllic pictures she paints of the Welsh rural landscape ("the exquisite scenery" around Talgarth, "the lovely vale of Llangollen", "the greatness and loveliness of the Cambrian mountains and valleys") are matched by those of the Welsh people; she devotes most of a page to celebrating "the generous, affable and gentle spirit pervading the whole [Welsh] people" and "the courteous and graceful demeanour …and gracious and engaging spirit …of the Welsh peasantry".[lxiii] Both references to the people and the landscapes suggest the rose-tinted spectacles of the nostalgic exile who wished to indulge herself in her memories.

Conclusion

From one perspective, *The Literary Women of England* can be seen as sharing a campaigning stance with *Artegall*; in the latter she had presented herself as the defender of the Welsh people against the slurs of ill-informed and prejudiced observers, and in the former she performed the same service for women writers. In *Artegall*, however, she had written for a clearly-defined audience; as this chapter has shown, *The Literary Women of England*

attempted to address two distinct groups whose concerns were not only different but sometimes at variance. It is not surprising that the book lacks a clear focus.

Williams's remarkable imprecision in her use of the terms 'England', 'English' and 'British' reveals a further lack of clarity at a deeper conceptual level, and many of the book's Welsh references are strictly irrelevant to its stated purpose of presenting "the lives, principles and sentiments of the most eminent and excellent English authoresses".[lxiv] The disproportionate space given to Hemans and her work is matched only by the disproportionate space given within her account of Hemans to Hemans's Welsh connections and Welsh-related poems. This imprecision, irrelevance and lack of proportion reveal the extent to which Williams's relation to Wales, and to England, had become conflicted.

Williams had established her literary reputation by writing about Wales and matters Welsh in English, primarily for English readers; as a woman writer living in London, to write about England and matters English would have made her one of an undifferentiated many. Her knowledge of Wales and matters Welsh, therefore, was her literary Unique Selling Point; but this does not explain the number of references to Wales and matters Welsh in *The Literary Women of England*, nor their irrelevance and imprecision. In the context of Williams's literary career, the book is interesting and revealing exactly because of its artistic incoherence; it suggests that her move to London had produced a conflicted response in her, both personal and literary. Her three previous books had progressively brought her closer to a core position of Welsh identity, although her English background and experience would always locate her in the borderlands of "inbetween-ness". When *The Literary Women of England* was published she had been living in London for six years: long enough to realise that her contact with, and everyday knowledge of, Wales was fading, and taking with it her ability to write from a position within Welshness. Her implied assertion that she was more

Welsh than Hemans was an attempt to convince herself, as much as any reader, of her continuing Welsh credentials, but at the same time she would have been aware that they were diminishing, and would continue to diminish inexorably. Practical reasons, as well as the potential loss of face, would have made it impossible for her to return to live in Wales, and life in London had many advantages. In terms of the way in which she related to Welsh identity, however, *The Literary Women of England* marked a fundamental, and irreversible, shift.

Notes

i Jane Williams (1861), p. 12.

ii Ibid, pp. 2, 6.

iii Ibid, p. 4.

iv Ibid, pp. 560-64.

v Ibid, p. 560.

vi Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 108-30.

vii John Duncombe, *The Feminiad, A Poem* (London: M. Cooper, 1754),ll. 49-50; George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (Oxford; printed for the author, 1752), p. vii.

viii Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico 1994 edn), edn), pp. 251-56.

ix Guest, p. 194.

x Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States 1780-1860* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1985), pp. 17, 134-35.

xi Jane Williams (1861), pp. 282, 315, 240-41.

xii Felicia Hemans, *Selected Poems, Letters, Reception Materials*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. xxi; Jane Williams (1861), pp. 396, 390.

xiii Hemans (2000), p. xxii.

xiv Jane Williams (1861), p. 418.

xv Ibid, pp. 210, 207, 213.

xvi Ibid, pp. 340, 459.

xvii Ibid, pp. 53-54, 277-79, 386-88.

xviii Ibid, pp. 237, 243, 211-12.

xix Ibid, pp. 179, 266.

xx Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1957), p. 57.

xxi Jane Williams (1861), pp. 272-4.

xxii Ibid, pp. 401, 410; 51, 159, 176; 198.

xxiii Ibid, p. 130.

xxiv See Jane Williams (1856).

xxv Quoted in Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 51.

xxvi Hemans (2000), p. xxii.

xxvii Jane Williams (1861), p. 301.

xxviii Sarah Prescott (2003), p. 8.

xxix Belinda Jack, *The Woman Reader* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 229-31, 236.

xxx Ballard, pp. 445-58.

xxxi Jane Williams (1861), pp. 217-38.

xxxii Ibid, pp. 115-119, 129-33.

xxxiii Ibid, pp. 152, 155.

xxxiv Jane Spencer, *Aphra Behn's Afterlife* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 270.

xxxv Duncombe, ll. 147-80; Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges, *Censura Literaria* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), p. 174.

xxxvi Jane Williams (1861), p. 128.

xxxvii NLW MS 26/9, Oct. 5th, 1851.

xxxviii Bronwen Price, 'Verse, Voice and Body': the Retirement Mode and women's poetry 1680-1723', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 12.3 (January 2007), 5, pp. 1-2.

xxxix Sarah Prescott (2003), p. 8.

xl Ibid, pp. 141-85.

xli *Oxford English Dictionary* Vol. VI, p. 444.

xlii H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 51-67, 80; John R. Bartlett, *Jews in the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 35.

xliii Jane Williams (1861), pp. 14-16, 134-35, 551, 558, 14.

xliv Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by I. A. Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 317.

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xlv Jane Williams (1861), pp. 221, 67.

xlvi Ibid, pp. 488, 427.

xlvii Ibid, pp. 253, 250.

xlviii Alexander Pope, 'Essay on Criticism', in *Alexander Pope: Poems*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 154.

xlx Jane Williams (1861), p. 390.

l See Peter Trinder, *Mrs Hemans* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1984), pp. 12-14.

li Emma Mason, *Women Poets of the Nineteenth* Century (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2006), p. 27.

lii Jane Williams (1861), p. 420.

liii Ibid, pp. 105, 139.

liv Ibid, pp. 143, 292, 249.

lv Ibid, p. 437.

lvi Ibid, pp. 135, 482.

lvii Ibid, pp. 443, 409, 408.

lviii Ibid, pp. 393, 404, 201, 423.

lix Ibid, pp. 15, 482, 23, 420.

lx Ibid, pp. 398, 421.

lxi Elizabeth Marsh, Williams's aunt, had at the time of publication been living in Ilfracombe for over ten years in increasingly impressive accommodation (1851, 1861 Census Returns for the Western Enumeration district of Ilfracombe; personal observation, 19/07/2007).

lxii Jane Williams (1861), p. 400.

lxiii Ibid, pp. 408-09.

lxiv Ibid, p. 2.

CHAPTER 7

Celtic Fables and imagined medieval Welshness

The Literary Women of England was the only book Williams had written since becoming a member of the Llanover circle which did not focus on Wales and matters Welsh. It had not achieved the status she had apparently hoped for it - it had not become the standard literary work on the subject - and it had not been a commercial success. After it she no longer directed her work at English readers but turned back to Wales for her source-material and focus; however, her situation in general, and her location in particular, were very different from those when she had written her earlier books. She was now living in London, and although she visited Wales from time to time (usually visits to relatives in Herefordshire before travelling to Talgarth and making long stays at Llanover) she no longer had the daily contact and knowledge of people and events in Wales which she had drawn on in her previous three books. This is reflected in her choice of subjects and in her approach to them; while *Artegall*, her biography of Carnhuanawc and the autobiography of Betsy Cadwaladyr had all used her personal knowledge of and contact with living Welsh people, the two books and two articles which she published after *The Literary Women of England* all relied on documentary sources and concerned people and events from the distant Welsh past. The focus of her later work was exclusively antiquarian - a direction undoubtedly safer for a writer living outside Wales, since a failure to understand the relevance or significance to her subjects of contemporary Welsh events and concerns was less important, but it also entailed

an absence of any attempt to engage with them. Her position in relation to Welsh identity accordingly underwent another shift, as this chapter will demonstrate.

The literary and cultural context of 'Celtic Fables'

Williams's next book, *Celtic Fables, Fairy Tales, and Legends, chiefly from Ancient Welsh Originals* (1862) took advantage of the nineteenth-century vogue for the reimagined medieval world with a Celtic flavour, but treated her source material in very different ways from other writers of the period. Williams's admiration for the poetry of Felicia Hemans was discussed in the previous chapter, but while she praised some poems in Hemans's collection *Welsh Melodies* (1822), she criticised others for their "insipidity" and failure to match the "stern pathos" of the Welsh originals.[i] Certainly the aims, as well as the tone, of Hemans's poems are very different from Williams's: whereas *Celtic Fables* narrate stories, Hemans's voice the emotional and exclamatory response of a participant in events of high drama in Welsh history or legend, or present sentimental musings on Welsh places, customs or artefacts; the poems which are directly based on Welsh originals (for example, 'The Hall of Cynddylan' and 'The Lament of Llywarch Hen') use jaunty jogging rhythms completely at odds with the slow heavy solemnity of their sources. Susan J. Wolfson has pointed out that in the early nineteenth century the work of a "poetess" was expected to "radiate sentiment",[ii] and *Celtic Fables* lacks the variety of "sentiment" which had made Hemans's work so popular. However, the book also stands apart from the earnest creative use of reimagined medievalism - especially Celtic medievalism - of the middle of the century.

Some of this interest expressed itself in making genuine early or medieval literature available to a wider reading public: Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogion* (1846), for example, Ab Ithel's *Y Gododdin* (1852), and Thomas Wright's edition of Malory's *Morte*

d'Arthur in 1858. Many writers and artists saw this material as the starting-point for their own interpretations and re-workings of such texts and legends, especially the Arthurian legends, in literature (Dinah Craik's *Avillion and Other Tales* in 1854, William Morris's *The Defence of Guenevere and other poems* in 1858), music (Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* was composed in 1859, though not performed until 1864), painting (Dante Gabriel Rosetti's frescos for the Oxford Union in 1858 included scenes from stories of Arthur, Merlin, Sir Gawain and La Belle Iseult),[iii] and architecture and interior decoration (Pugin's designs for the new Houses of Parliament were accepted in 1835). Together these examples demonstrate the extent to which Victorian medievalism had gripped the literary, cultural and political elite. The collection of poems of this period which bears the most direct comparison to *Celtic Fables* is Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King* (begun in 1856 and published in 1859), and the contrast between them puts Williams's collection into clear contemporary perspective.

Eggars has argued that Tennyson presented "his Arthurian vision as the flower and demise of an ideal society rather than as the battles of a single hero", and that his poems offer a portrait of a major strand in Victorian social thought, "with its high idealism, strict morality, and warring extremism",[iv] while Roger Simpson, in a detailed analysis of Tennyson's role in the Arthurian Revival, emphasises the way in which contemporary critics praised the *Idylls* for communicating emotions which were "private but nonetheless universal", especially "a frustrated sense of longing or regret...a mood of heroic melancholy".[v] The popularity of mid-century medievalism may have suggested to Williams that poems from medieval Welsh and Celtic sources might attract favourable attention (and sales), but contemporary literary expressions of Celtic medievalism seem to have had little if any influence on *Celtic Fables*.

The publication of 'Celtic Fables'

No details of the publication have survived apart from the name of the printer, but since there is no list of subscribers it must be assumed that the printing was paid for privately.[vi] Augusta Hall had paid for the publication of *Artegall* and had been responsible for many subscriptions for Carnhuanawc's *Literary Remains*, but both these books were very clearly contributions to the Welsh 'national cause' to which she devoted so much energy. On the other hand, Williams's limited income (whose purchasing power had been significantly eroded since 1845) meant that paying for the book's publication herself could also have been difficult. Unlike Williams's other books after *Miscellaneous Poems*, *Celtic Fables* does not attempt to make a case or argue a cause: to rebut the slurs of the 'Blue Books' (*Artegall*), to honour Carnhuanawc's cultural patriotism, to raise money for, and celebrate the exploits of, the redoubtable Betsy Cadwaladyr, to assert women's right to read and write literature (*The Literary Women of England*), or to demonstrate the existence of a distinctive Welsh historical identity (*A History of Wales*). The poems which make up *Celtic Fables* lack this sense that they were written for the public domain: rather, they collectively create the impression that Williams composed them because something in her sources amused her, piqued her interest, or gave her the opportunity to explore (consciously or unconsciously) themes which had personal significance for her.

The title page makes the relation of the poems to their sources clear: the originals have been "versified", a description which focuses on their form rather than their content (as, for example, "translated" or "adapted" would have done). The list of Williams's other publications mentions only *The Literary Women of England*, *Artegall* and Carnhuanawc's *Literary Remains* - that is, books which supported Williams's image as a 'serious' writer.

Williams's sources

Welsh prose versions of seven of the ten poems are to be found in the Iolo Manuscripts, the papers of Iolo Morganwg which were bought by Hall and her husband from Iolo's son Taliesin Williams in 1848 and subsequently held in the Llanover library. The source of six of the seven is acknowledged at the head of the poems ('The Ancients of the World', 'The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie', 'The Mole and the Lark', 'The Two Fishes', 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' and 'The Legend of Llynsafaddan II'). The seventh is 'The Three Ages', which appears as a pendant to 'The Ancients of the World' and is attributed there to Iolo Goch, although the Iolo manuscripts state firmly that the longer poem from which the lines are taken was written by Siôn Cent.[vii] An account of Iolo Morganwg's papers (published in 1910 and apparently based on the memories of Hall's daughter Mrs Herbert) describes them as uncatalogued and bound together according to size rather than content.[viii] However, they had certainly been classified by the time a selection of 183 items (with English translations by Taliesin Williams) was published in 1848 by the Welsh Manuscript Society, of which Hall was a founder-member and leading figure. The fact that Williams chose so many of the 'Fables' (rather than, for example, the 'Tales') as her sources indicates that stories which used 'types' rather than individualised characters, and which carried an explicit moral message, offered her material she felt she could use for her own literary purposes.

Of the three poems not based on the Iolo Manuscripts, two are based on anecdotes from *Itinerarium Kambriae* by Giraldus Cambrensis; it is acknowledged as a source for 'Elidwr' but not for 'The Legend of Llynsafaddan I'. The standard English translation of Giraldus for most of the nineteenth century was that by Sir Richard Colt Hoare (published in 1806); Williams knew this well and used it extensively in her *History of Wales*, so that Hoare's translation, rather than the Latin original, was probably her source for these two poems. The remaining poem, 'The Funeral of the Little People', described on its title page as "A Celtic

Tradition from Cornwall", is based on an article by Robert Hunt which had appeared in the *Athenaeum* on 10 October 1846; Williams's papers show that she had written the poem by 9 November.[ix]

An analysis of the Fables

The poems fall into two categories: fables and stories whose plots use animal characters ('The Ancients of the World' and 'The Three Ages', and the four fables: 'The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie', 'The Mole and the Lark', 'The Two Fishes' and 'The Grasshopper and the Ant'), and fairy tales and legends whose plots use human characters ('Elidwr', 'The Funeral of the Small People', and the two 'Legends of Llyn Safaddan'). This chapter will consider the two categories separately before moving to a general consideration of the book as a whole, examining Williams's choice and treatment of her sources both in terms of her approach to her material and for the evidence which this choice and treatment presents on the way in which she located herself in relation to Wales and Welsh identity at this period of her life.

Fables and stories whose plots use animal characters

Williams chose to "versify" five of the 183 pieces of prose and poetry in the Iolo MSS, four of the five coming from the twenty-six fables. In this section I wish to consider the properties of the fable in general, and of the animal fable in particular, in order to provide a context for a discussion of the way in which she uses her sources. From its earliest history fable has been regarded warily by those in authority (as, indeed, has the novel), presumably because of its secular origins, since divinely-sanctioned parables, which perform a similar function, are entirely acceptable (the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, for example, carries a similar

moral message to the Aesopian fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper).[x] Certainly fable-writers often felt the need to defend the fact that it used a fiction to communicate its message: Dryden, for example, declared that "The Truth is moral, though the Tale a lie".[xi] Mark Loveridge quotes the epigrammatic descriptions by H. J. Blackham ("fable is paradox") and Rosalie Coelie (""fable tells the truth and it doesn't"), and attributes the definition "a fictitious story picturing a truth" to Theon (c. A.D. 1-2).[xii] He points out that while the criteria for the ingredients of the "fictitious story" have developed and been refined over time, its property of being simultaneously true and false has always been fundamental, and that pre-literary Aesopian fables were felt to be morally honest in a way that romances, which "deceived, ensnared the emotions, and covered their tracks with plausibility" were not; fables were "*transparently* false" (original emphasis).[xiii] The fable could thus simultaneously instruct and entertain (thus fulfilling Horace's criterion), and its explicit moral precept gave it social acceptability and distinguished it from other "fictitious stories" - for example, romances. Many fable-writers were outside the power structures of their time.

John Ogilby, whose *Fables of Aesop* (1651) was one of the most influential works in the genre, was a "disappointed royalist" whose fables made clear his position on the Commonwealth.[xiv] Sir Roger L'Estrange, whose *Fables of Aesop and Other Mythologists* (1692, 1699) dominated the genre for the following thirty years, was a Roman Catholic and Stuart sympathiser who had fallen out of favour with the arrival of William and Mary in 1689. Samuel Croxall, whose *Fables of Aesop and Others* (1722) remained standard until the nineteenth century[xv], was a disillusioned Whig.[xvi] Other fabulists were also outside the mainstream of their societies, as Jayne Elizabeth Lewis has pointed out.[xvii] Dryden (*Fables Ancient and Modern*, 1700), Anne Finch (*Miscellany Poems*, 1713) and Gay (*Fables*, 1726 and 1738) all used the Aesopian method to comment on contemporary politics and were all excluded from the dominant political culture, either by Stuart loyalty (Dryden and Finch),

religious faith (Dryden), gender (Finch) or party sympathy (Finch and Gay). Aphra Behn, doubly excluded as a non-aristocratic woman who wrote for money, also used her re-workings of Aesop's fables to comment on contemporary politics.[xviii]

During this period the animal fable gained particular popularity, since it allowed writers to exploit its double nature by combining a surface which presented an innocent animal fantasy story suitable for children with a sub-text which satirised people or events of the time (Aesop's image was of a slave "who spoke truth to his masters using the licence of indirection") and between the mid-seventeenth and late eighteenth centuries, "the beast-fable was transformed from a marginal, barely literary, genre to one regarded as the chief representation of several different kinds of figurative writings".[xix] The beasts in these fables needed to demonstrate animal, as well as human, characteristics; Joseph Warton damned Gay's fable 'The Elephant and the Bookseller' both because the elephant could read Classical Greek fluently and scornfully rejected a job as a hack critic while not in any way behaving like a pachyderm, and because the fable did not, in Lewis's words, permit "a single clear moral" to emerge.[xx]

Lewis argues that the rise of new, realistic genres such as the novel during the eighteenth-century "robbed fictions as conspicuous and self-ironising as Aesop's of much of their authority".[xxi] Later collections, for example by Christopher Smart (1761), Horace Walpole (1771), Thomas Bewick (1784) and William Godwin (1811), made relatively little impression on the reading public, and fable as a genre became increasingly confined to books for women and children, although some political potential remained.[xxii] Works such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Evenings at Home* (1797) and Maria Edgeworth's *Moral Tales* (1801) and *Popular Tales* (1804) demonstrate the ways in which the fable could became an apparently

more domestic genre, often intended to give simple moral lessons to children and to be read aloud by, or under the supervision of, a parent.

Gert Reifarth and Philip Morrisey point out that a successful fable requires "a recipient who decodes the relation of the Aesopic description to reality";[xxiii] Loveridge suggests a decline in the number of willing and able "recipients" as a possible reason for the marginalisation of the fable as a literary form in the nineteenth century.[xxiv] This suggestion raises further questions about Williams's choice of the genre, since her sources follow the form of the traditional fable, and she would have been aware of the work of the great English fabulists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when choosing and writing her own (in Bakhtin's dictum: "A genre lives in the present but always remembers its past").[xxv] If she had turned her originals into Welsh verse she would have been able to rely on potential readers willing to interpret her versions thoughtfully, since the traditions of Welsh working-class scholars and autodidacts provided many such, but the poetry-buying English-language public might not be so willing to involve themselves in an intellectual engagement with her work. Her choice of the fable genre goes to support the impression that she wrote the poems for her own interest and pleasure rather than for a specific intended readership.

Fables which deviate from their sources (i) 'The Ancients of the World'

Two of the 'animal fable' poems in Williams's collection maintain the subversive tradition of the fable in its 'golden age'; in one case this subversion is clearly deliberate, in the second case it may be less so. The plot of 'The Ancients of the World' is a variant on an episode in 'Culhwch and Olwen', one of the eleven prose tales in the *Mabinogion*. In Williams's source, an elderly Scottish king eagle, looking for a new mate, considers the Owl of Cwmcawlwyd as a possible candidate but needs to know her age in order to be certain that she is past breeding

age, since any offspring he might have with her would be so low-class as to pollute his blood line.[xxvi] He therefore consults the Ancient Creatures (the Stag of Rhedynvre, the Salmon of Glyn Llivon, the Ouzel of Cilgwri and the Toad of Cors Fochno), each of whom in turn refers him to the next until finally the Toad, the oldest of them all, assures him that the Owl already had great-great-grand-daughters when he himself was young. The Eagle, reassured as to the Owl's advanced years, decides that she meets his specifications.

Williams's poem continues the story after Iolo's version ends. When the eagle visits the Owl to inform her that he has decided that she is, after all, worthy to be his mate, she fixes her "deep-set eyes" with their "lurid light" on him, points out that he should know that "the aged never like their home to change", and delivers a stinging rebuff:[xxvii]

> Sooner the Stag shall Rhedynvre forsake,
> Sooner the Salmon leave fair Llivon's lake,
> Sooner the Ouzel quit Cilgwri's thorn,
> Sooner the Toad desert Cors Fochno's bourn,
> Yea, sooner thou shalt shun thine ancient rock,
> Than I resign Cwmcawlwyd's sheltering nook.
> Return, proud Eagle, to thy lonely state.
> Cwmcawlwyd's Owl rejects thee as her mate!
>
> (Jane Williams, 1862, p. 14)

This ending subverts everything that has gone before - the Eagle's quest was pointless, and his unthinking confidence in the Owl's acquiescence completely misplaced - and the poem as a whole subverts the sexist assumption underlying Williams's source that it was for the Eagle, rather than the Owl, to decide whether she would be his mate; until the final 13 lines (of 173) the reader has been led to accept the Eagle's perspective, and therefore the reality of masculine social power in the society he lives in. The Owl's riposte functions as a reminder

that she also has power, if only that of refusal, and is an assertion of her social as well as sexual equality; the Eagle would not contemplate moving in order to live with a new mate, and neither will she.

This sardonic distancing from her conventional source is mirrored in Williams's treatment of the characters in the story. Her Ancient Creatures greet each other like courtly eighteenth-century aristocrats (when the Eagle visits the Salmon, "due courtesies were paid in form and word"), and the epithets she uses for them approach the mock-heroic - the Salmon is "the watery sage", the Stag is the Eagle's "antlered friend" - while the Eagle treats the Stag as his trusted family solicitor.[xxviii] Her choice of iambic pentameters in rhyming couplets both exploits the metre's potential for satirical purposes and further demonstrates her debt to eighteenth-century poetry.

Fables which deviate from their sources (ii) 'The Grasshopper and the Ant'

Her treatment of the fable 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' also subverts the conventional message of the original, although less self-consciously, and makes the moral of the Aesopian fable, which teaches that prudence and forethought are preferable to irresponsibility and living for the moment, much more ambiguous; like Gay's fable mentioned earlier, it refuses to allow a simple moral to emerge. Both the changes to the details of her original and her choice of vocabulary enlist the reader's support for the lively and improvident Grasshopper against the smugly prudent Ant. As the title suggests, the story is told from the perspective of the Grasshopper rather than from the Ant's as in her source, which begins "the Ant had [worked] diligently through the summer to lay up provisions for himself" (Myrionen a fu'n ddiwyd tra fu'r haf i gynnal ei ossymaith).[xxix] The Grasshopper's "sprightly and sociable" character and "blithe" good humour and glee" are in tune with the lush beauty of the poem's

setting in the Welsh summer countryside and the "light, warmth and enjoyment" it creates.[xxx] Williams also changes the nature of the obligation by which the Ant should have helped the Grasshopper; whereas in Iolo's version the Grasshopper is the Ant's kinsman and 'brother in spirit' ("câr" and "dy frawd ffydd"), in Williams's poem the Ant heard and enjoyed the Grasshopper's singing, and "[f]orgot anxious care, while in marching along/He heard the glad sound of the Grasshopper's song" - that is, for Williams the Ant's obligations are on the basis of a personal and direct *quid pro quo* rather than social and general as they are in her source.[xxxi]

Earlier fabulists had made it clear that prudent self-interest should be tempered by charity: L'Estrange's 'Reflexion' on this fable, while praising "Good Husbandry and Thrift", emphasises that they must not be used as a cover for avarice and that "the Necessities of our Neighbours have a Christian Right to a part of what we have to spare".[xxxii] By contrast, Williams's Ant demonstrates only "contempt" for the "desolate" Grasshopper, and she emphasises his callousness by negatives: he shows "no brotherly kindness, no pity for want" before he turns the Grasshopper away, and no remorse even after he finds the corpse on his threshold the following morning ("compunction scarce touched him"). The Ant's hostility is stronger than callousness alone; the last words he addresses to the Grasshopper - "Depart, thou improvident wretch, from my door!" - are not only an addition by Williams (in her source the Ant merely refuses to help) but seem even to begrudge the wretched Grasshopper permission to shelter from the cold winds of the freezing night against the walls of the Ant's house. [xxxiii] Further, the bitter cold of winter (in Iolo, merely bad weather) becomes in Williams's version an unforeseeable natural disaster, comparable to "pestilence" and "the sudden destruction of earthquake and fire", so that in her fable, the Grasshopper's attitude - "the present to him seemed a sort of forever" - becomes an entirely rational approach to life. Williams's choice of an anapaestic metre is in keeping with the light-heartedness and gaiety

of the Grasshopper, imitating the lively dancing movement of his "galliard".[xxxiv] The Ant is unsympathetic (in all senses) and grimly works the summer away; the Grasshopper is a far more attractive character and has a far more enjoyable life, but ends up dead. If William's treatment allows a lesson to be drawn, therefore, it is the reverse of the conventional one.

Other fables from the Iolo Manuscripts

Each of the fables in the Iolo Manuscripts ends with an explicit moral, and proverbial sayings related to it. Williams's three other fables all remain close to their originals; 'The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie' makes explicit its moral in its last four lines, while 'The Two Fishes' and 'The Mole and the Lark' both end with moral-like axioms which reflect on the lesson to be drawn. All three are far more socially and ethically conservative than her treatments of 'The Ancients of the World' and 'The Ant and the Grasshopper'. The moral of 'The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie' is that advice and education are wasted on those who wish to persist in their own ignorance, while the other two fables both exemplify a precept with which Williams would have been familiar from the Anglican Catechism: the Christian obligation to "do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me". Taken together, these poems based on fables from the Iolo Manuscripts represent an interesting mix of the conventional and conservative on one hand, and the idiosyncratic and subversive on the other, both in terms of Williams's treatment of her source material and the 'Morals' they communicate.

Poems whose plots use human characters

The poems with human protagonists can be sub-divided into two categories: two fairy tales ('Elidwr' and 'The Funeral of the Small People') and two legends (both of Llyn Safaddan).

The cast-lists of the first two include fairies, but while these fables contain some elements of the traditional fairy tale - that the events are "improbable but are treated as if they could happen to you, me or the people next door" - neither achieves the 'happy ending' of traditional fairy tales, with success or victory for the hero; in this respect they are less fairy tales than legends, in Vladimir Propp's classification.[xxxv] Their elements appear frequently in European folklore and in variations as far apart in culture, time and place as the legend of Atlantis, the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of England, and 'The Wizard of Oz'.[xxxvi]

The fairy tales

Both 'Elidwr' and the 'Funeral of the Small People' give their protagonists a glimpse of another society, physically more beautiful and more delightful and well-ordered than their own society, but which is lost for ever when they break its rules. The stories of both poems fulfil some of Propp's criteria for what he calls the 'wondertale' (i.e. both fairy tales and folk tales).[xxxvii] The story begins with the hero leaving home, his journey forms the axis of the tale, it ends with his arrival either at home or in another city or land, and the entrance to the other world is located in a rural, often wooded, landscape.[xxxviii]

In both Williams's source and her own poem the young protagonist (Elidyr in Giraldus, Elidwr in Williams; the two forms of the name will be used to distinguish the two versions) is taken to the underground realm of Fairy Land and is happy there until he takes proof of its existence back to the upper 'real' world (Jack Zipes suggests that the folk tale is "often an easy doublet for the initiation myth").[xxxix] Elidyr's mother asks him to bring her back a ball of gold, while in Williams's poem she asks merely for "some token true" and he chooses a beautiful flower which turns into a "massive ball of gold" on contact with the upper air. In

both versions he is pursued by vengeful fairies who seize back the golden ball and mock his despair at his loss, and in both versions the consequence of his disobedience is that the entrance to the magical world is closed to him forever, leaving him, in Williams's poem, "a convict scorned for graceless theft/Of Fairy favour evermore bereft".[xl]

In her source, however, Elidyr, for the rest of his life "could never relate the particulars [of his experience] without bursting into tears".[xli] By contrast, Williams's version conforms to Zipes's suggestion that the theme of many fairy tales is "the flight and return of the child who successfully reconciles himself to a mother or a home".[xlii] As an adult, Elidwr is able to regard his brief glimpse of Fairy Land as a lesson to reject youthful illusions, whereas Elidyr (an old man in Giraldus's story) is bitterly conscious of his loss for the rest of his life. Marina Warner has suggested that the fairy tale has two directions, one towards acquiescence and the other towards rebellion; Williams's changes move Elidwr towards acquiescence in a way that her source does not.[xliii]

Her version of 'A Funeral among the Small People' also departs from her source, in ways which make her account more dramatic than the original. The story of the mortal who stumbles upon a ritual gathering of the Small People which punishes him or vanishes as soon as he inadvertently reveals his presence is one of those most frequently found in folk tales (and elsewhere - the legend of Actaeon, for example); Warner suggests that curiosity runs through many folk tales and is often punished as rule-breaking.[xliv] In Williams's source, the beginning of the story makes it clear that Richard, the protagonist, survived the experience;[xlv] in Williams's version the reader sees the events entirely from Richard's perspective, accompanying him on his journey home from St. Ives with a load of pilchards and sharing his astonishment at the fairy funeral taking place in Lelant church. In Hunt, Richard's involuntary cry of sympathy at the fairies' grief is followed by the immediate dousing of all the church

lights, and the fairies' revenge: "Many of them brushed past the terrified man and, shrieking, pierced him with sharp instruments. He was compelled to save his life *by the most rapid flight*" (original emphasis).[xlvi] Williams stops the action at the moment when the fairies hear Richard's cry - "That very instant all was rout/And every fairy light went out" - that is, at a moment of high drama and suspense which omits Richard's punishment, so that the fairies remain beneficent.[xlvii]

Both fairy tales tell stories of sudden and irrecoverable loss, and can both be seen as conveying the message summarised by Zipes: "a balance must be struck between the inner [fairy] and other worlds of human beings, between the creative forces of the imagination and the reality principle of the world".[xlviii] In Williams's poem Elidwr allows "the reality principle of the world" to dominate the rest of his life (unlike Elidyr in her source). In 'A Funeral among the Small People' she omits the retribution in her source for giving way briefly to the power of the other, more beautiful world, but also the possibility of achieving this balance, by her decision to end her story where she does.

The legends

Both legends of Llyn Safaddan, like the fairy tales, share plots with many others in folklore: that of the birds and/or animals which recognise their rightful king (Legend I) and of a city destroyed as punishment for the wickedness of its inhabitants (Legend II). The first legend produces the only poem in the collection to give its characters individual names (the Welshman Gruffydd and the Normans Earl Milo and Payn Fitz-John) and to set its action in a specific historical period (the reign of Henry I), in both of which it follows its source.[xlix] Legend II, based on a story in the Iolo manuscripts,[l] is set in the medieval never-land favoured by many folk tales, and her (anti-)hero lacks a name, a characteristic of such tales

noted by Propp.[li] The other characters are named as in a morality play: 'the Maiden' becomes 'the Lady' after marriage; 'the Suitor' turns into 'the Murderer'.

Legend I tells the story of Gruffydd who one winter's day was riding past Llyn Safaddan in the company of the two Norman lords, one of whom referred to the Welsh legend that the birds on the lake would burst into song at the command of the rightful ruler of the land. Prince Gruffydd (promoted by Williams from a mere lord in her source) suggested that since the two Normans ruled the land, they should test the legend; they both tried in turn, and failed. They then insisted that Gruffydd should test the legend; he prayed for divine help before giving the command, at which the birds performed to order and the air was filled with a choir of heavenly voices. This conclusion leaves open the question of whether recognition of the rightful ruler was enough to start the birds singing, or whether divine help was also necessary. One of the poem's most notable variations from Williams's source is the way in which it changes the focus and attitude to the characters by privileging Gruffydd; given the values which operate in the world of legend it is not surprising that the birds ignore the Normans' arrogant commands and obey the respectful Gruffydd.

Giraldus adds a coda: Henry I, on hearing of the incident, replies that the event is "not a matter of so much wonder; for although by our great authority we commit acts of violence and wrong against these people, yet they are known to be the rightful inheritors of this land".[lii] In Giraldus's account, therefore, the wise and statesmanlike king acknowledges that Gruffydd's claim has moral right on its side while making it clear that he will do nothing to change the *status quo*; the Norman king and his lords will remain rulers of Wales, however enthusiastically the birds sing. (Giraldus Cambrensis, in spite of his epithet, had more Norman blood than Welsh.) By ending the story at the moment when the birds rose singing

from the lake, Williams's poem does not need to face the political realities of its period (or of later Welsh history); for the poem, the rightness of Gruffydd's cause is apparently enough.

Legend II suggests a different moral perspective; punishment follows a crime (and sin), but not only the guilty suffer. In Williams's poem a noble lady initially rejects her suitor firstly because he is poor and secondly because he has committed murder to get the money she demands; she only agrees to marry him after a "sepulchral" voice in "hollow tones" tells her that retribution will be deferred for nine generations (in the source she accepts him as soon as he has the money).[liii] Williams's poem also omits her source's most vivid and striking details: that after the town near the murderer's home is swallowed up in a lake, three chimney tops, still emitting smoke, are visible rising from the water, and that on its surface floats a pair of gloves bearing the name and arms of the murdered merchant. The poem may use the old tradition of a submerged legendary or fairy town, but the focus of her poem lies squarely on the theme of inevitable punishment for sin, omitting the eye-catching detail of smoking chimneys and conveniently-identifiable gloves in her source.[liv] Bettelheim's suggestion that a bad person has to 'lose' in a legend or fairy tale to inculcate the conviction that crime does not pay is made explicit in Williams's version.[lv]

Llyn Safaddan (later known as Brecknock Mere) is near Talgarth, and the river Llynfi, near which she had lived in her early years in Glasbury, rises from it. Williams would have known the local tradition quoted in Theophilus Jones's *History of Brecknockshire* from Gibson's Camden's *Britannia* (which she also knew well): that there had once been a city called Loventium on the site of Llyn Safaddan which had been "swallowed up by an earthquake".[lvi] Use of this source would provide her explanation for the lake's disappearance; "terrific tremblings rend the earth". Here it is the timing of the vengeance (the ninth generation of the murderer's descendants) that has supernatural overtones rather than the event itself.[lvii] In

Williams's version, nature (rather than a divine presence) takes its revenge on the descendants of the murderer; it may be relevant that in medieval Welsh law, relatives to the ninth degree of consanguinity of a convicted criminal could be held as responsible as he was for paying his blood-fine.[lviii]

The collection of poems as a whole

It is noteworthy that none of the poems has a conventional 'happy ending'. Of the fables and stories about birds and animals, the Eagle and the Owl do not 'live happily ever after', the Grasshopper, the adventurous Fish and the Lark meet painful deaths on land, in water and in the air respectively, while the Wood Pigeon, unabashed, continues to build the same untidy nests. Of the fairy stories and legends with a human cast, two give their protagonist a glimpse of another, more beautiful and better-ordered, world but then deprive him of it permanently, while the second 'Legend of Llyn Safaddan' visits retribution not only on the murderer but also on the inhabitants of the near-by town. Only the first 'Legend of Llyn Safaddan' comes near to a moment when the protagonist's wrongs are righted, and that moment is as transient and fragile as birdsong.

Williams is at pains to assert the authenticity of her source material in the title of the volume, and in this she follows the example of Hemans in *Welsh Melodies*; in both cases, the authors make clear that the poems are not merely their *jeux d'esprit* but are rooted in the antiquarian authority of medieval manuscripts. The fables, fairy tales and legends in Williams's collection are "chiefly from Ancient Welsh Originals", and their sources are given at the head of each poem (except for the first 'Legend of Llyn Safaddan' which, unlike 'Elidwr', is not sourced to *Itinerarium Kambriae*). This is reinforced by her use of documentary material to support details within the poems: for example, her extensive quotation from Gibson's Camden's

Britannia as an introduction to 'The Ancients of the World', her reference to the sources of her four fables from the Iolo Manuscripts, and the extract from a standard work on ornithology to support her poem's description of the Magpie as an expert nest-builder ('The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie'). Her choice and treatment of these scholarly sources, however, demonstrates a very personal engagement with their themes.

Williams's use of Welsh references and locations

Williams uses Welsh landscapes as the setting for the majority of the poems in the collection. Certainly in 'The Ancients of the World', 'Elidwr' and the two 'Legends of Llyn Safaddan' this follows her sources, but in three of the four fables she introduces a Welsh setting to plots for which the Iolo Manuscripts present unspecified locations and the fourth ('The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie') is set in a landscape reminiscent of Welsh hill country.[lix] Even 'A Funeral among the Small People', explicitly set in Cornwall, has Welsh echoes in the name of its location among the "drifted sands", since its Cornish name, Towen, is a variant of the Welsh *tywyn* (sand dune).[lx] Williams's use of a Cornish legend with a setting whose name is a reminder of the common origins of the two languages emphasises Welsh and Cornish shared ethnicity and common Brythonic language and heritage.

The explicitly Welsh settings for three of the four fables vary from the generalised (the action of 'The Grasshopper and the Ant' takes place amid "Cambrian scenes"), to the very specific ('The Two Fishes' disport themselves in "the Wye's strong current"), and 'The Mole and the Lark' is set on "the lofty Mynydd Dû [sic]".[lxi] These specific geographical references carried very personal resonance for Williams. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 9, for much of her life between her late teenage years and her late thirties she had lived in the parish of Glasbury, situated on the banks of the river Wye, in an area characterised by liminal complexities;

different parts of the Wye's course have functioned as the border both between Wales and England and between Radnorshire and Breconshire, and Damian Walford Davies has drawn attention to "the status of the Wye Valley as uncanny frontier land and border space".[lxii] By the time *Celtic Fables* was published in 1862 Williams's family had lived in Talgarth in Breconshire for approximately thirty years, and she herself had lived there for at least nine; The Black Mountains rise east-south-east of Talgarth, and the higher wooded area is known as 'Mynydd Du (Black Mountain) Forest'.[lxiii] Setting the fables in places she had known well and had lived near for many years gave them a very particular personal resonance.

K. M. Briggs has discussed the fact that fairies and other legendary characters - especially Celtic ones - were seen as having a particular affinity with sources of natural water, both rivers and the sea, and Williams's choice and treatment of her sources offer clear examples.[lxiv] While the Salmon of Llyn Llivon has only a supporting role in 'The Ancients of the World', the action of 'The Grasshopper and the Ant', 'The Wood Pigeon and the Magpie' and 'The Mole and the Lark' takes place on or near river banks and 'The Two Fishes', as mentioned above, are denizens of the Wye. The entrance to Elidwr's Fairy Land is via a cave "on Towy's shore".[lxv] The 'Funeral of the Small People' takes place in a church near Hayle creek, and in the two 'Legends of Llyn Safaddan' the lake is a major character in the story. In the first, it is the home of the birds which recognise the Welsh prince as their rightful lord, whose sensitive character and noble Welsh lineage have given him a deep and sympathetic understanding of the natural world of Wales which the arrogant Norman outsiders will never comprehend. The implication is clear: only someone "Welsh by descent and long residence" (to quote Williams's words to the trustees of the Royal Literary Fund) could truly understand, or truly be at home in, Wales.

The second Legend ends with an explicit reference to a body of water which was of great significance to Williams's early life, to her knowledge of the area where the legend is set, and to her first publication: the river Llynfi, a tributary of the Wye which it joins at Glasbury. As was discussed in Chapter 2, her poem 'Lines on the Banks of the Llunvey" [sic] uses the river (which passes close to Pipton Cottage, where Williams was living at the time) as a metaphor for the rapid reverses which life can bring, from the "wonted calmness" of its "crystal stream" in summer to its "boisterous…rav[ing]" in winter.[lxvi] The Llynfi, therefore, had a very strong personal significance for her, recalling a period in her life which, given her family's recent financial disaster at the time the poem was written, their enforced move from London and her own loss of social status and personal autonomy because of her position in the Pipton Cottage household, is likely to have held some painful memories - but also a period which had seen the publication of her first book and had allowed her to find her own literary voice.

The ending she provides for 'The Legend of Llyn Safaddan II' not only varies from her source by implying that the disappearance of the city into the lake was caused by an earthquake, but adds a completely new - and, in context, surprising - consequence:

> Terrific tremblings rend the earth,
> Lo, vengeance, ruin and despair!
> And where the Murderer's turrets rose,
> The Lake is spread, and Llynfi flows.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1862, p. 47)

This last half-line, which introduces a new and completely unexpected element, comes close to suggesting that all the dramatic events of the poem up to this point were part of a Grand Design for the creation of the river Llynfi.

This makes her choice of the poem's position in the book particularly important. Both in *Miscellaneous Poems* and in her biography of Carnhuanawc she had followed (apparently deliberately) the example of Giraldus Cambrensis in *Itinerarium Kambriae* by using the item placed last in the book as an expression of thoughts and feelings that were particularly important to her; the creation of the Llynfi gains an even greater significance as the last clause of the last line of the last poem in the book. The significance of Williams's reference to the Llynfi, however, could only be fully understood by readers aware of the way the river was interwoven with major events in her early life. Her use of it here, years later and in a book published in London, is a very private - and personally very significant - reference which provides not only a dramatic final flourish to her poem but also an enactment of her deep and lasting engagement with Wales and its landscape.

'Elidwr' may offer another example of a Welsh place with very strong personal resonance for her, although in this case it must be adduced from what she avoided saying rather than what she made explicit. In Hoare's translation of *Itinerarium Kambriae* the entrance to Fairy Land is "under the hollow bank of a river"; Williams's poem, however, changes this to "Towy's cave".[lxvii] As the previous chapter showed, the image of a cave was one that held great resonance for her, not only as a place separate from the world outside but as a way of dramatizing a different, specifically feminine, perception of reality.[lxviii] She may also have had other, more personal, reasons for preferring the entrance to a world of abundance and perfect happiness to be a cave rather than in the "hollow bank of a river"; the Welsh term for a ledge, a rim or (in this context) an overhanging bank is *ysgafell*,[lxix] the name of her father's ancestral estate to the west of Newtown, sold by her paternal grandfather in spite of the protests and lasting resentment of his children.[lxx] If the Ysgafell estate had remained in the family her father would have inherited it, and in that case her life would have been very different.[lxxi] She would not have needed to work for those with more money than herself

throughout her later teens, twenties and thirties, and she would have had access to the social and cultural privileges and connections which would have allowed her to move in the Llanover circle, for example, as an equal rather than as a dependant. She would also, of course, have had a long-established ancestral home in Wales which her family owned rather than rented (as they did Neuadd Felen in Talgarth). Her choice of 'Ysgafell' as her bardic name can be seen as an attempt to reclaim by her writing the ownership of the estate which was now in another family's hands; the resonance for her of an entrance to an enchanted land of perfect happiness which had been reached via an *ysgafell* and which had been later lost for ever may well have been too painful to contemplate.

Williams's Elidwr, the "Cambrian School Boy", who was given the chance of a more colourful, more enjoyable and more physically beautiful life, had it snatched from him when he broke its rules.[lxxii] In Giraldus, "the youth, having been…restored to his right way of thinking, and to his learning, in process of time attained the rank of priesthood".[lxxiii] After recounting the failure of his repeated attempts to find the entrance to Fairy Land, Williams's version focusses on the role of learning in his later life:

> At last the weary-hearted wanderer sought
> And prized the privilege of cultured thought;
> Hence Elidwr, the truant Boy, appears
> The Scholar and the Priest in after years.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1862, p. 36)

- and the order of the epithets make clear which was the more important.[lxxiv] Her version implies both that scholarship can be a consolation for lost happiness and also a tight-lipped awareness, born of experience, that the extent of deep loss is realised only in hindsight. The vividly-described delights of Elidwr's own personal Garden of Eden are redefined at the end

of the poem as "illusive pleasures"; the reality of life is "earthly woe", which can only be borne through religious faith.[lxxv] The parallels with Williams's own life are obvious; the similarities are brought even closer by the fact that her own life changed suddenly for the worse when she was in the same period of her life as Elidwr. It is easy to see how the story of a youth who was granted happiness, had it unexpectedly taken away from him and later found consolation in study and his religious faith, might have sparked an imaginative and creative response in her. Her poem 'Elidwr', which draws on her abilities and experience both as a scholar and a poet, can be seen as performing the work of consolation it describes.

When Williams published *Celtic Fables* she had lived in London for seven years, visiting Wales only occasionally. The Wales of her poems is a land of lushly-beautiful rural landscapes where it is always spring or summer (except for 'A Legend of Llyn Safaddan I', which requires the birds' starting position to be on the frozen surface of the lake). Her poems, set in a time of legends or a vaguely medieval never-land, suggest that by this time she saw Wales through an antiquarian and literary soft-focus which did not need to engage with the day-to-day realities of contemporary life in rural Wales, still less with life in its industrial cities; tellingly, the description in 'The Grasshopper and the Ant' of "glorious summer" in the Welsh countryside, full of warmth, light and colour is later revealed to be a memory; the reader has been shown the illusion of an illusion.[lxxvi]

Conclusion

The near omni-presence of Wales, and specifically the Welsh countryside, in *Celtic Fables* raises particularly clearly the question that continually emerges from any consideration of her work; where did she feel she belonged? The changes in residence in her early life, and the ways in which this made her a liminal figure, have been discussed in previous chapters, but

those changes had been at the behest of others; her move to London in 1855 seems to have been the first time that she chose for herself where to live. The fact that she used Wales in general, and Welsh places with personal resonance for her in particular, as the setting for so many of the *Celtic Fables* may reflect an awareness of what she had lost by moving to London, although not necessarily an ambivalence about the wisdom of the move. On the surface Wales was a land of summer, a land of vivid and dramatic legends; but at a deeper level were earlier memories of life in Wales which related to loss, unhappiness and powerlessness. She had resisted the position into which circumstances had forced her as a teenager and had forged a new identity for herself as a successful and respected author in Wales, but when viewed from London her memories of life in Wales could not help but be ambivalent.

In 1851, when living in Breconshire, she described her first visit to London for thirty years as a return to her "native air"; in 1871, in her application to the Royal Literary Fund for a grant, she gratuitously identified herself as "Welsh by descent and long residence, but born in Chelsea". *Celtic Fables*, published halfway between these two dates, provides some indications of the processes of identification and re-identification which were necessary for her to morph from the former position into the latter. These poems suggest that she was very conscious that she had deep roots in both Wales and England and that, whichever of the two countries she was in, she was always acutely aware of the presence of, and her bonds with, the other. She was familiar with, and knowledgeable about, life and history on both sides of the border and was in the position of being able to "pass" in both countries: neither wholly Welsh in Wales nor wholly English in England, and able to move easily from one society to another but never able to free herself from awareness of her deep connections with both..

Her awareness of her status as simultaneously an outsider and an insider in both countries may have given her the perspective(s) which made particularly attractive the use of animal fables, fairy stories and legends, as they had been to the English fabulists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but her purposes were personal and literary rather than political or social. The collection suggests a writer trying to decide, and come to terms with, the questions of who and where she was - but, certainly, not one who had reached the point when she could give a decisive answer to the question: where, for her, was hom

Notes

i Jane Williams (1861), p. 421.

ii Susan J. Wolfson, *Borderlines: the shifting of gender in British Romanticism* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 41.

iii This section is based on J. Philip Eggars, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's 'Idylls of the* King' (New York: New York University Press, 1971), pp. 228-232.

iv Eggars, pp. 5-7.

v Roger Simpson, *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson 1800-1849* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), p. 249.

vi Thomas Brettell, Rupert Street, Haymarket, Westminster.

vii "Yr Athro Sion y Cent ai Cant" (The Master of Poetry Siôn Cent composed this), *Iolo Manuscripts: A Selection of Ancient Welsh Manuscripts* (1848; Liverpool: Welsh Manuscripts Society, 1888 edn), p. 288.

viii Marion Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg, 1826-1926* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 178.

ix NLW MS 24051F, ff. 14-20.

x Matthew, 25, i-xiii.

xi John Dryden, *Poems and Fables*, ed. by James Kinsley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, repr. 1980), pp. 681-701.

xii Mark Loveridge, *A History of Augustan Fable* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 34, 70.

xiii Ibid, p. 10.

xiv Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture 1651-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

xv Loveridge, p. xii.

xvi Ibid, p. 32.

xvii Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, p. 5.

xviii See, for example, Aphra Behn, *The Uncollected Verse,* ed. by Germaine Greer (Stump Cross, Essex: Stump Cross Books, 1989), Fable LXX, p. 81.

xix Loveridge, pp. 6, 101.

xx John Gay, *Fables* (London: The Scolar Press, repr.1973), pp. 313-325; Jayne
xxi Ibid, pp. 51, 185-6.

xxii Ibid, p. 186.

xxiii Gert Reifarth and Philip Morrisey (eds.), *Aesopic Voices* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 5.

xxiv Loveridge, p. 261.

xxv Bakhtin (1994), p. 188.

xxvi Iolo MSS, pp. 188-90.

xxvii Jane Williams (1862), p. 13.

xxviii Ibid.

xxix Iolo MSS, p. 156.

xxx Jane Williams (1862), p. 28.

xxxi Ibid.
xxxii Sir Roger L'Estrange, *Fablers of Aesop and other Eminent Mythologists* (London: D. Brown and others, 1724 edn), p. 236.

xxxiii Jane Williams (1862), p. 29.

xxxiv Ibid, pp. 28-29.

xxxv Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), p. 37; Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000 edn), p. 64.

xxxvi Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 239, 247-8.

xxxvii Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: on Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. xiv.

xxxviii Propp, pp. 22, 118.

xxxix Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tale as Myth: Myth as Fairy Tale* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), p. 5.

xl Jane Williams (1862), p. 35.

xli Giraldus Cambrensis, p. 391.

xlii Zipes, p. 145.

xliii Warner, p. 409.

xliv Ibid, p. 415.

xlv Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England: or, the Drolls, Traditions and Superstitions of Old Cornwall* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1871 edn), p. 102.

xlvi Ibid, p. 103.

xlvii Jane Williams (1862), p. 40.

xlviii Zipes, p. 153.

xlix Giraldus Cambrensis, Book I, Ch. 2.

l Iolo MSS, 194.

li Propp (1984), p. 27.

lii Giraldus Cambrensis, p. 352.

liii Jane Williams (1862), p. 43.

liv K. M. Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). p. 4.

lv Bettelheim, p. 9.

lvi Theophilus Jones, *A History of the County of Brecknock* (Brecon: Edwin Davies, 1809), I, p. 4.

lvii Jane Williams (1862), p. 44, l. 63. John Rhys refers to yet another version, "contained in 'a manuscript of Hugh Thomas' in the British Museum"; John Rhys, *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901), I, pp. 72-74.

lviii Thomas Peter Ellis, *Welsh Tribal Law and Custom in the Middle Ages* (Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aarlen, repr. 1982), p. 92.

lix Jane Williams (1862), pp. 15, 38, 27.

lx Jane Williams (1862), p. 38.

lxi Jane Williams (1862), p. 27, l. 3.

lxii Damian Walford Davies, *Cartographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 26.

lxiii Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 161.

lxiv Briggs, p. 23.

lxv Jane Williams (1862), pp. 32, 31.

lxvi Jane Williams (1824), p. 16.

lxvii Giraldus Cambrensis, p. 39; Jane Williams (1862), p. 32.

lxviii Jane Williams (1861), p. 2.

lxix *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, Vol. IV, p. 3829.

lxx The Will of Henry Williams of Evenjobb (made 18 July 1800, Administration granted 1 June 1801; held in Herefordshire Record Office) threatened to disinherit his children if they should be so "undutiful and disobedient to [his] wishes" as to challenge his sale of the Ysgafell estate; this suggests that, eleven years after the sale, his children still deeply resented its loss.

lxxi See NLM MS 24051F, ff. 62.

lxxii Jane Williams (1862), p. 31.

lxxiii Giraldus Cambrensis, p. 391.

lxxiv A similar transformation was a staple of early Celtic history: see, for example, the epitaph for an eighth-century Irish monk in *The New Oxford Book of Irish Verse*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Kinsella (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 14.

lxxv Jane Williams (1862), p. 36.

lxxvi Jane Williams (1862), pp. 27, 28.

CHAPTER 8

The History of Wales and two historical articles

History had been one of Williams's major intellectual interests since girlhood, as the poems 'Revenge' and 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation for the Death of the last Llewellyn Prince of Wales' [sic] from her collection of 1824 demonstrate. In her last three prose publications she engaged with the subject again, in a book and two articles: *A History of Wales derived from Authentic Sources* (1869), ' Some Particulars Concerning the Parish of Glasbury' (1870), and 'Henry Williams of Ysgafell' (1871). *A History of Wales* had taken several years to research and write, and internal evidence (which will be discussed later in this chapter) indicates that the information and documents on which the two articles are based had been acquired at least a quarter of a century earlier. In this context, the fact that the book and articles were published in successive years makes it likely that there were specific reasons for the timing of their publication; the most probable explanation is to be found in Williams's state of health.

Her death certificate gives the cause of death (in 1885) as "Dilation of heart and defective action", and states that the condition had been recorded by her doctor thirty years earlier - that is, when she first moved to London in 1855.[i] In her grant application to the Royal Literary Fund in 1871 she described herself as "an invalid", referred to her "always fragile health", and declared that "During five, six or seven months of every years I am constantly confined to two rooms, and often to one. Even in warm weather, when I am at my best, I continue a sufferer from incurable maladies and can scarcely walk a furlong's length".[ii] These medical problems had begun before she moved to London; the Preface to her biography of

Carnhuanawc (written while she was living in Talgarth) attributed its "repetitions" and typographical errors to the fact that she had been "working constantly against the drawback of ill-health, and lately under a weight of suffering".[iii] Further, her letters from Llanover and Abercarn in 1851 show that when members of the house-parties there went walking in the surrounding countryside, it was accepted that Williams had to go on horseback if she was to accompany them.[iv] Taken together, these pieces of evidence suggest a long-standing heart-lung condition, which became progressively worse during the second part of her life and in the end killed her (her eldest brother died in his thirties, apparently of a heart condition, and her father died in his forties, so this may have been an inherited weakness).[v] Williams's account of her deteriorating health in her application to the Royal Literary Fund refers specifically to the "ill-health" she had suffered during the four years she spent writing *A History of Wales*, and certainly its final paragraphs (which will be discussed later in this chapter) give the impression of an author who wished to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion as rapidly as possible.[vi]

It is therefore probable that work on most (at least) of the later stages of the book were affected by an awareness that her health could only deteriorate further, and that prudence suggested that she should complete the book and supervise its publication as quickly as possible. It is also probable that her decision to write and publish the two historical articles from material which she had had for many years was also governed by a desire to complete them and see them published while she was still able to do so. This chapter will examine her *History of Wales* and her two historical articles in their order of publication, setting them in the context of contemporary views on the nature and purpose of history, and considering what they show about the way she positioned herself in relation to Wales during the period of her life when she was writing them; it is likely that her failing health and wish to complete

them satisfactorily had at least some effect on her approach to the writing of these last three prose works.

Writing history as a nationalist project

Neil Evans and Huw Pryce have argued that in the nineteenth century "one of the requirements of being a nation was the possession of a closely documented, professionally established historical record".[vii] Many communities connected by geography and language (Italy, Germany) or embedded in larger nation-states (in eastern Europe) saw a written national history as demonstrating their distinctive nationhood in a way that legends and folk-tales did not. As members of an "imagined community", in Benedict Anderson's phrase,[viii] members of a national group needed to be able to tell themselves their national history to aid the process of "formulat[ing] a sense of belonging" necessary for national cohesion.[ix] One reliable method of encouraging this sense of belonging was to emphasise the gulf between the national group and external Others, so that some criteria of national identity depended on being clearly differentiated from the perceived criteria for membership of an Other national group. While the importance of national history to the work of creating a national identity was recognised, there was also considerable ambivalence towards the past; on one hand it was backward, even primitive, in comparison with the modern, forward-looking, scientifically-minded society of nineteenth-century imperial Britain, and on the other it was the source of the fashionable - and frequently unhistorical - medievalism in literature, art and architecture discussed in the previous chapter. As an article in the *Cardiff Times* of 18 March 1871 declared, "the restoration of medieval relics, and the destruction of medieval ideas, are what we see going on all around us in the nineteenth century".[x]

A national history had to be objective, in order to be trustworthy (and it was understood that objectivity was possible).[xi] Further, it had to be continuous, so that a clear connection could be drawn between characteristics deeply embedded in the nation's 'primordial origin' and their manifestation in contemporary members of the nation.[xii] It also had to be linear, so that the national history could be presented as a record of the nation's stately and inevitable progress towards its successful present; this 'Whig' view of history, especially popular in Britain, had to present disruptive events which had changed the course of national history (for example, the Roman occupation of Britain, the Norman Conquest, the Reformation) as minor potholes on the nation's great highway to its glorious destiny.[xiii] A national history had the task of describing the nation to itself - not only as it had been, but as it inherently was at the present; to tell the story of one's own nation was to make a patriotic contribution towards nation-building, while to tell the story of another nation might be anything from the expression of an antiquarian interest to a determination to put the Others in their (inferior) place. The position and allegiances of the historian were paramount in determining the nature of his or her history.

Earlier histories of Wales in English

In her study of histories of Wales in the early modern period, Grace Jones has pointed to the "ambivalent and contradictory" representation of the country, simultaneously seen as a place of wilderness, barbarism and corruption and as a land of ancient and heroic legend; further, she has analysed the way in which the Tudor monarchs' use of the latter representation for the purposes of their own propaganda empowered Welsh authors to argue for the importance of their own view of the past.[xiv] Any writing about the history of Wales implicitly recognised it as having (or as having had) an existence separate from that of England. Jones argues that

Humphrey Llwyd's *Commentarioli Britannicae descriptionis fragmentum* (1568) - a description of the landscape, people and history of England, Scotland and Wales - aimed both to validate the civility of Welsh culture and to question the legitimacy of its suppression, and sees another landmark history of Wales written later in the sixteenth century - David Powel's *The Historie of Cambria, now called Wales* (1584) - as taking this argument further by declaring that since all colonisation is against the law of Nature the Welsh had a moral right to resist the Saxon and Norman invasions of Wales which, in Powel's words, had turned them "from civilitie to barbarisme". Further, she sees the histories by Llwyd and Powel as both "resist[ing] the ways in which English representations of Wales were constructed in this period as part of a project to validate Tudor control of the Principality and its people." Her analysis acts as a strong reminder that a history can never be divorced from the period in which it was written and the aims (conscious or unconscious) of its writer - and, of course, neither can judgements made about it by others. Daniel Lleufer Thomas's description of Williams's *History of Wales* in his entry on her in the 1900 edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography* as "even to this day, the best history of Wales in English" both reflects Lleufer Thomas's own views of what a history of Wales should be and the paucity of academic histories of Wales in the nineteenth century.[xv]

The nineteenth century saw the emergence of history in Britain as an academic discipline, but much of this scholarly attention was rooted in an appreciation of the orderly process of English constitutional development; by contrast, Welsh history was seen as being deficient in constitutional history, since it was considered to have ended in 1536 with the first of Henry VIII's Acts of Union, if not in 1282 with the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. In the words of Neil Evans and Huw Pryce, "scholarly Welsh history found it difficult to get beyond the Middle Ages"; after that period Welsh history was "widely seen as melding into England" and both Wales and Scotland "were content with 'unionist nationalism' and tributaries of the

Whig interpretation [of history]".[xvi] Since this interpretation saw changes in industry, technology, agriculture and the economy as proof of national progress, it was difficult to argue that a nation popularly seen as having lost its separate identity four centuries earlier deserved to have its post-medieval history written for nineteenth-century readers. Carl E. Schorske has pointed out that it was exactly these processes of modernisation that created an interest in ties to the past, and the medievalism in literature, art and architecture discussed in the previous chapter offered a romantic alternative to the harsher aspects of industrialised Britain.[xvii] Medieval Welsh literature and history offered a particularly wide choice of dramatic events and heroic or tragic characters who could be presented in colourful and easily-understood terms; an academic history of Wales which presented a more complex and nuanced picture was likely to attract far less interest.

Lleufer Thomas might have considered that there had been few serious nineteenth-century histories of Wales in English, but this did not mean that no historical works on Wales had been published. There were books for children: *Stories from the History of Wales* by Eliza Constantia Campbell (1833), for example, in which the author used her stories to inculcate both socially acceptable conduct and politically acceptable opinions. When the son for whom the 'Stories' were ostensibly written asks if Wales would have benefited by remaining unconquered by England, his father (a Scot) replies that "though Wales might have preserved a nominal independence, her people would not have enjoyed the ease, freedom or comfort that they do at the present day".[xviii] For adults there were histories which focused on a particular historical figure: for example, Thomas Thomas's *Memoirs of Owen Glendower* (1822). There were histories of parts of Wales, such as Angharad Llwyd's *History of the Island of Mona (*1833), and books which told the history of Wales by recounting the lives of one section of its population, as in T. J. Llewelyn Prichard's *Heroines of Welsh History (*1854).

There were also histories of Wales (for adult readers) of the type which Evans and Pryce identify as 'unionist'. *The History of Wales* by the Englishman B. B. Woodward (1853) was explicitly written from the perspective of "our Saxondom" and deployed an impressive range of historical, linguistic and literary material to make the point that Welsh history only began with the invading Saxons and that "the extinction of the liberties of a brave people" was necessary to prevent Wales "from being a perpetual hindrance to the great task which we see was allotted to the Saxons under the chieftainship of the Normans".[xix] Many English histories of the period argued that within the 'superior' Caucasian division of mankind the Teutonic and Saxon branch was uppermost with the Celts struggling far behind them (for example, George Combe's *On the Constitution of Man* in 1835), and Woodward's book falls squarely within this tradition.[xx] The history of Wales in English written closest in time to Williams's book was *The British Kymry, or Britons of Cambria* (1857) by R. W. Morgan, Vicar of Tregynon in Montgomeryshire, who provided a sharp riposte to Woodward's emphasis on ‘Saxondom‘ ("we stand amazed at the blindness which wanders groping for the origin of British rights and liberties in the swamps of the mother-land of feudal serfdom - Germany") and provided a detailed ’Genealogy of the Britanidae, or Royal Line of Britain from Gomer and Brutus or Prydain to Queen Victoria’.[xxi] This neatly illustrates the point made by Berger and Lorenz that a dynasty - even an 'imagined' one - could be "a symbol of integration and unity, and a possible focus for the narration of nation".[xxii] In many ways Williams's book represented the first attempt since Powel's *Historie of Cambria* in 1584 to write a scholarly history of Wales in English which did not rely for much of its content on legends or the exploits of individuals, or conclude, like William Warrington's *The History of Wales* (1786) and *Cambria Triumphans* (1805), that exchanging "the wild and precarious liberty" of Wales before the Edwardian conquest for the "Constitutional Liberties" bestowed by incorporation with England had been entirely "beneficial to the vanquished", not least because of the

intellectual, social and cultural benefits which allowed the Welsh to "polish their manners, to enlarge their views, and to cultivate their minds" - that is, to conform their manners, views and minds to those of England.[xxiii] By avoiding similarly explicit Anglo-centricity, Williams's book took the writing of Welsh history into a different area.

As a woman she was inevitably an amateur historian, unable to attend a university and thereby acquiring the training and systematic reading which marked the development of the professional historian from the ranks of antiquarians of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries. Major academic libraries were equally inaccessible, although she was able to use the extensive library at Llanover Court, as discussed in Chapter 4. In view of this amateur status and her difficulties in gaining access to some of the material she needed, her decision to write a history of Wales was decidedly ambitious. Her motivation seems to have been that she thought that a new scholarly history was desirable and that her long interest and reading in the subject at least equipped her to make the attempt; she may well have seen it as performing a public service: doing in English what Carnhuanawc had done in Welsh.

A History of Wales derived from Authentic Sources

One of the reasons for the length of time Williams spent on the book lies in the amount of preparatory reading implied by the second part of its title; she provides over 2,100 references to support her statements, drawing on sources in English, Welsh, French and Latin plus other works in translation (for example, in Classical Greek), and while some are obvious (Caesar, Tacitus, Powel's *History of Cambria*, Gibbon, Camden's *Britannia*, *Myvyrian Archaeology*) the list also includes Herodotus and Aeschylus, Milton, Spenser, Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, and the Iolo Morganwg manuscripts. Stefan Berger has commented that in the nineteenth-century "only the historian who had 'mastered' the sources could become a

genuine historian commanding respect from his fellow peers" (the grammatical gender of the pronoun tells its own story) and has usefully described this approach as "source fetishism"; Williams suffered from this particularly severely.[xxiv] This focus on sources was characteristic of many earlier historians whose antiquarian interests led them to privilege the detail of early documents rather than offer an interpretation of them, and in Williams's case may have been heightened by an insecurity which derived from exactly her awareness that she was not a trained historian, that she had not had a university education, and that there was a substantial body of relevant reading material to which she had not had access. Whatever its cause, limits the 'useful[ness]' of her book in the eyes of later historians, who see J. E. Lloyd's *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (1911) as the first modern history of Wales which remains significant (rather than merely interesting or revealing) today.[xxv]

In considering Williams's *History of Wales* I have found particularly suggestive David Lowenthal's dictum that "Every historical account displays a bias peculiar to itself and inseparable from its time and author".[xxvi] The "peculiar bias" of any individual historian perhaps manifests itself especially clearly in relation to the biases exhibited by other historians, and I have found it useful to set Williams's book alongside Carnhuanawc's *Hanes Cymru* (History of Wales), which had been written some thirty years before Williams was finishing her *History* in the late 1860s. As discussed in Chapter 4, Williams's biography of Carnhuanawc makes it clear that she both knew Price's work well and respected him as a scholar, so that when her approach differs from his this is likely to have been a matter of deliberate choice.

Two perspectives on Welsh history: Williams and Carnhuanawc

An immediate and obvious point of contrast between the two is that Carnhuanawc's History was written in Welsh, Williams's in English; she was thus able to take advantage of the language's social, cultural and international authority. More than this, however, her book was both published and presented to readers in an English context and written for a London publisher (*Hanes Cymru*, by contrast, was published in Crickhowell). Her book appeared on Longman's general history list, which included histories of England, Ireland, France and India as well as Classical Greek and Roman history; the presence of Williams's book among these titles, therefore, in itself asserted that Wales fulfilled the same criteria for nationhood as the other countries in the list, and that Welsh history should be considered on an equal footing with theirs. Further, each chapter is headed by an epigraph which is not only in English but is taken either from the English literary canon of previous centuries (Shakespeare, Spenser, Pope, Cowper) or from nineteenth-century English writers already accepted as major literary figures (Wordsworth, Southey, Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning). English readers were thus presented at regular intervals with reassuringly familiar names from their national literature.

Writing her *History* in English, a world language, gave Williams far more potential readers than Price, but also put her at a far greater distance from them. He frequently addressed his readers directly, and referred to the earlier inhabitants of Wales as "*our* ancestors", "*our* forefathers" and, even more revealingly, "*our* tribe" (ein hynafiaid, ein cyndeidiau, ein llwyth; emphasis added).[xxvii] Williams, by contrast, followed the examples of historians of her period who believed that their task was to retrieve the past intact; in Lowenthal's summary of their views: "True history was not made but found. No hint of the historian should intrude; to hear an author's voice would taint an account's veracity and erode its authority. To claim omniscience, history must be anonymous".[xxviii]

This 'anonymous' approach is demonstrated very clearly by the fact that Williams uses no first-person verbs or adjectives in her history; she does not address her readers directly and her only reference to herself is oblique in both the grammatical and general senses.[xxix] In an account of a line of first-century fortresses she mentions Tacitus's "graphic description' of the site of a battle and the 'intrenchments of Caer Caradog and Coxwall Knoll, situated upon the rugged heights rising northward of the River Teme". This is accompanied by a footnote: "The ground has been personally explored by the author, and the following authorities confirm her opinion", followed by detailed references to sources ranging from *De Bello Gallico* through Gibson's Camden's *Britannia* and Pennant's *Tours* to a lecture (printed) by the geologist Sir Roderick Murchison at a meeting of the Cambrian Archaeological Society at Ludlow in August 1852. Apparently seven authoritative sources were necessary to support her personal experience before it qualified as a fact.

In contrast to Carnhuanawc's closeness to his readers and his involvement with his material, Williams establishes an impersonal distance between herself and her sources, presenting herself to her readership as an interpreter of Welsh history who could be trusted not only because of the authority of those sources but also because of the impartiality consequent on her position as a neutral observer. Taken together with the fact of the book's publication by English publishers in a series of volumes of the histories of many countries and the use of epigraphs from the English literary canon, this careful construction of an authorial persona without personal connections with Wales or the Welsh people - in marked contrast to Carnhuanawc's standpoint, as a patriotic Welshman addressing his compatriots - bears some similarities to Williams's technique in *Artegall*, her attack on the 1847 Reports of the Commissioners. In *Artegall,* however, her awareness that the Reports would affect the lives of the Welsh people among whom she lived, and her concern to draw attention to the injustices of the Reports in the hope that their effects might be mitigated had, as shown in

Chapter 3, led to the gradual crumbling of her impartial stance. Her *History of Wales* was a different matter. It drew its material from antiquarian documents and lacked the immediate contemporary relevance of *Artegall* as well as its campaigning urgency; to produce a 'trustworthy' account of the history of Wales, she had to eliminate any indications of her own views and personality. Her motives for writing *A History of Wales* derived from a conviction that Wales - her nation - deserved to have an account of its history that would assert its separate identity to those who were not Welsh, but in order to do this she had to efface her own Welshness.

Three salient features of Williams's 'History of Wales'

I wish to consider the "peculiar bias" (in Lowenthal's phrase) of Williams's *History of Wales* by identifying its three most important characteristics and examining the ways in which they reveal her approach to, and treatment of, her source material. Again, a comparison with the way in which Carnhuanawc's *Hanes Cymru* treated the same material and events is instructive, and helps to identify the characteristics of Williams's account particularly clearly.

A comparison of her approach with Carnhuanawc's makes the first of these characteristics very clear. Although *Hanes Cymru* begins by emphasising that legends are not history, Carnhuanawc nevertheless gives a lengthy account from Nennius of the voyage of Brutus from Troy to Britain and the establishment of his dynasty in the island after his followers had killed all its giants. Carnhuanawc knew that these traditional legends could no longer be accepted as reliable indications of historical fact, but in spite of his formal caveats, both the space he devotes to the story, and the quantity of colourful details he gives, create a strong impression that this is the account which he finds most congenial; certainly it plays

powerfully to one of his major themes: the uniqueness of the Welsh among the nations of the world.

Williams takes a very different approach. After an epigraph from Tennyson, her first chapter begins as follows:

> It has been well said that the memory of races, like that of individual men, tenaciously and vividly retains the recollections of infancy, which become in each race the subjects of oral traditions and of songs and ballads, until at last they assume a mythic or symbolic form, presenting usually two different aspects, one exhibiting the migrations of the several tribes and their arrival in successive colonies; the other assigning to each race a paternal ancestor, whose name personifies that of the people, and from whom an ethnological genealogy connects their tribes as his children and the kinsfolk of each other.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1869, p. 1)

The phrase "ethnological genealogy" establishes a scholarly distance between Williams and her material, so that "their tribes" become objects of anthropological investigation, emphasised by her use of the third-person possessive pronoun "their"; this contrasts sharply with the solidarity between writer and readers established by Carnhuanawc's use of "our tribe" (ein llwyth), noted above.

Using the analytical tools provided by the new and intellectually-fashionable science of anthropology, Williams establishes a template in this first paragraph, and then shows how it can be applied to the Welsh founding myth. She first recounts how Roman annals say the ancestors of the Welsh came from Troy (the migration) and arrived in Britain (the relevant colony). She then refers to one version in which "Brittus, called also Briutus or Bruttus" was "a descendant of Japheth" and "the progenitor of the Britons", giving his name to their tribe and history; she also refers to another version in which Brutus was descended from the

Trojans. She does not point out that the existence of two versions makes it obvious that they cannot both be true; instead, she recounts one immediately after the other, allowing their juxtaposition to draw her readers' attention to the existence of the competing versions and the consequent unreliability of (at least) one of them. In the context established by her first paragraph, the Welsh are exactly like other nations in having a founding myth (in their case, two versions of it); from the beginning, therefore, her account makes its point that Wales has its own national identity, and implies that the rest of her history will also demonstrate that the Welsh meet the international criteria for nation status.

The second characteristic feature of her *History* is observable in her treatment of the Romans in Wales, and here also her attitude is thrown into sharp relief by Carnhuanawc's. In *Hanes Cymru* he compares the Roman army to "a terrible ravening wild beast with iron teeth which devoured the island of Britain" (bwystfil ofnadwy ac erchyll, â'r danedd haearn a [f]wytaodd a dryllio [ynys Prydain]), and although acknowledging that Roman roads were impressive feats of engineering, describes their remains in Wales as a shaming reminder of oppressive foreign occupation: "the roads [are] scars on the face of our country, marks of the whip" (y ffyrdd…yn greithiau ar ein gwlad, olion y fflangelliaid).[xxx] Williams, on the other hand, sees the Roman army as a force of order which created the conditions for social stability among the warring tribes and were sensitive to the traditions of the indigenous community ("the firm framework of Roman laws…enclosed without crushing the ancient British institutions"), and points out that the roads built by the Roman army for military purposes benefitted civilians.[xxxi] She lists the range of fruit and vegetables which the Romans brought to Britain, including many which had come to be taken for granted as features of British landscapes and gardens ("the chestnut tree, the plane, the Lombardy poplar and the bay laurel… the damson, the eatable cherry, the peach, the apricot, the culinary quince, the fig, the mulberry and the medlar…radishes, lettuces, peas and beans") as well as useful domestic animals and birds,

and she illustrates the extent to which Roman imports had literally become part of the Welsh landscape by referring to "the luxuriant vines which still decorate the white-washed cottages of Glamorganshire".[xxxii]

Paved roads and useful plants made for the establishment of a peaceful civil society; she praises the emperor Carausius, a Romanised Briton, because he "encouraged the best shipwrights, builders, masons, craftsmen and workmen of every kind, thus promoting the improvement of useful and ingenious arts, while stimulating individual talents and national industry", so that Carausius is presented as an entirely positive example of 'what the Romans did for us'.[xxxiii] Whereas to Carnhuanawc a Romanised Briton such as Carausius had by definition gone over to the enemy, to Williams it was possible for a foreign occupation to have beneficial consequences if it established the conditions necessary for a peaceful civil society. The contrasting approaches of Carnhuanawc and Williams to such Roman influences and imports which changed the daily lives and livelihoods of those living in Britain in general, and Wales in particular, reveal diametrically opposite interpretations of Welsh national identity. To Carnhuanawc, the Ancient Britons and the Welsh were essentially exactly the same people living at different historical periods; they lived in the same territory, spoke the same language (allowing for inevitable modifications over the centuries) and shared the same - pure - bloodlines; the Romans, like other invaders, had colonised the Welsh for a time but the effects of their rule had been only superficial and therefore easily reversed after the end of the occupation. To him the Welsh people as an ethnic and linguistic entity moved through their history unchanged and unchanging; as they had been in the past so they were in the present and would be in the future, and their uniqueness was an essential part of their history and their identity. To Williams, by contrast, the Welsh people were a nation like all the other peoples of the earth; the major events of their history - such as the Roman occupation - had changed them permanently and had contributed to who they were and how

they lived at the time she was writing. For her, this history, and the complex legacy of its important events and periods, had shaped a correspondingly complex Welsh national identity, in contrast to Carnhuanwc's essentialism.

The third feature which I regard as key to her *History* is the way her religious views determined the selection and treatment of her source-material. Her religious writings will be discussed in detail in the following chapter; at this point I wish to consider the way her religious views led to bias and distortion in her treatment of her sources in her *History of Wales* (a similar process in one of her historical articles will be discussed later in this chapter).

An example of the effect of her religious views in shaping her account of Welsh history is provided by comparing the significance of the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in her *History of Wales* with its treatment by Carnhuanawc - and, indeed, most other Welsh historians - for whom it is a climactic event in Welsh history and the point at which the 'truly Welsh' history of Wales ended with the loss of national independence. Carnhuanawc ends a discussion of the significance of the death by identifying it as the event which completely extinguished the independence of the Welsh nation ("Fu yn achlysur o lwyr ddiffoddiad annibynolrwydd y Cymry").[xxxiv]

Historians of Wales both before and after Williams shared this view of the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd as a watershed in Welsh history. Huw Pryce has drawn attention to "a widespread assumption among the new 'scientific' professional historians that emerged in nineteenth-century Europe that history should be concerned mainly with states and their politics. By that yardstick, Wales since the fall of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282 was plainly deficient. Small wonder, then, that the Welsh proved reluctant to integrate the post-medieval centuries into narratives of national history."[xxxv] Although Williams's comments on

"ethnological genealogy", quoted earlier, show that she was fully aware of contemporary, as well as traditional, views of how a national history should be written, her treatment of the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd ignores all of them.

She recounts the events leading to Llywelyn's death, describes the fates of his head and body and refers to elegies in his memory by Dafydd Benfras, Bleddyn Fardd and Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch - and there the chapter ends. The following chapter begins with a detailed summary of the provisions of the Statute of Rhuddlan and then recounts how "the wise and sagacious King Edward" made his infant son the Prince of Wales.[xxxvi] Since there is no discussion of the political, military or social consequences of the obliteration of the line of the princes of Gwynedd, the effect is to suggest that the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd was merely one of a series of events in medieval Welsh history rather than a watershed. A reason for this becomes clear in her account of events in the sixteenth century; if Williams had not treated Welsh history in the late thirteenth century as moving in an unbroken line she could not have presented the Reformation, rather than the end of the native Welsh dynasty, as the pivotal process in medieval and early modern Welsh history.

She had prepared for this treatment by drawing attention to the perceived shortcomings of the medieval church, emphasising the way it manipulated and was manipulated for political ends, and refusing to take most churchmen seriously: for example, Rhudderch Hael and Giraldus Cambrensis.[xxxvii] The prominence which her account gives to ecclesiastical corruption and personal ambition in the medieval Church acts as calculated preparation for her account of the Reformation as the event which established 'true' religion in Wales, with the Protestant Bible at its heart, and she emphasises the Bible's importance further by devoting four pages to an account of the Welsh translation.[xxxviii]

This leads her to a remarkable judgement on the so-called 'language clause' of the 1536 Act of Union. By this Act Henry VIII ordained that all legal and official proceedings should be conducted in English, and that "from henceforth no Person or Persons that use the Welsh Speech or Language shall have or enjoy any Manner Office or Fees within this Realm of England Wales or other the King's Dominion".[xxxix] This clause, which drastically restricted the domains of the Welsh language and diminished its prestige, had been criticised, and its effects lamented, by generations of Welsh historians and writers, and Williams's life and writings show that she fully supported the language's use and continuing existence.

Her account of the 1536 Act of Union, however, makes it clear that she had greater priorities. Although she describes the 'language clause' as "a lamentable mistake [which] instituted a grievance which has been cruelly felt through many following generations", for her this "mistake" was far outweighed by Henry VIII's role in the Reformation:[xl]

> For deliverance from the domination of the Pope of Rome, and for the suppression of the monasteries, England and Wales stand for ever indebted to the fiercely resolute will of Henry VIII.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1869, p. 481)

This comment is particularly remarkable because she clearly had no illusions that the Reformation proved that Henry VIII himself had in fact become a Protestant, or even was sympathetic to its doctrines; in *The Literary Women of England* she had established the context of the religious persecution suffered by one of her sixteenth-century subjects, Anne Askew, as follows:

> It must be borne in mind that the Protestantism of King Henry VIII consisted chiefly in the personal assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy and in the abrogation of papal privileges throughout his dominions. It was not the religious tenets of the monks, but their bold and obstinate adhesion to the papal authority, which provoked the King to

> the general dissolution of the monasteries; and throughout his arbitrary reign many of the genuine doctrines of the Reformation were publicly repudiated as heresy. In 1539, at the royal suggestion, an Act was passed attaching the penalty of death by burning or hanging to the denial of transubstantiation, to the assertion of the necessity of communion in both kinds, of the unlawfulness of celibacy, of the uselessness of private masses, and of auricular confession as necessary to salvation.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1861, p. 43)

This Act, as she expected her readers to understand, prescribed the death penalty for the doctrines and practices fundamental to the Protestant faith, so that the inclusion of the fact that it was instigated "at the royal suggestion" personally implicates Henry VIII in the persecution of his Protestant subjects. Williams was therefore under no illusion as to his credentials as a defender of the Protestant faith; rather, she saw him as a bigoted and ignorant instrument of God's will, who had been used to work out the divine purpose in establishing a national church independent of the Pope, within which true Protestantism could be created under the aegis of later, more enlightened, rulers.

Williams was typical of her background and historical period in the hostility to the Roman Catholic Church exhibited in her gratitude to Henry VIII for "deliver[ing England and Wales] from the domination of the Pope of Rome". This prejudice not only pervades her book but informs its closing paragraph, in which Williams gives her considered conclusion on the character of contemporary Wales and the factors which were responsible:

> Under the influence of gentler and more equitable treatment than the nation ever experienced before the accession of their Henry, and under the divine power of scriptural truth, Wales has gradually become a land of peace, to which bloodshed, with heinous crime in every form, is now almost unknown.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1869, p. 495)

One of the most revealing choices of vocabulary in this sentence is the reference to "*their* Henry" (emphasis added). Williams's impartial stance requires her to distance herself from the Welsh people, in contrast to Carnhuanawc, a Welshmen telling his compatriots their shared history, who constantly used "our". The point it makes about her religious position, and the way it dictates her historical judgement, is equally clear; it presents as an objective fact the highly contentious claim that "the divine power of scriptural truth" only manifested itself in Wales after the Reformation. As in her treatment of the Roman occupation, the final sentence of her book shows that her criterion for successful governance was the establishment of social and political stability (as initially created by the accession of the Tudors after the Wars of the Roses). It is likely that 'gradually' in this final sentence alludes to the years since the decades of civil unrest in Wales earlier in the nineteenth century, which gave rise to the sense of alarm and foreboding behind many of Price's comments and which, from the viewpoint of the 1860s, could be felt to be safely in the past. Carnhuanawc's history concludes with an anxious hope for the future, that "as long as the Gospel is preached in the Welsh language, Almighty God will not permit the language or the nation that speaks it to be eradicated from the land" (tra y pregethir yr Efengyl yn y[r] Iaith Gymraeg, na fydd i'r Hollalluog Dduw adael i'r iaith honno gael ei diffodd na'r genedl a'i harfera gael ei dileu o'r tir).[xli] By contrast, Williams's concluding sentence declares that perfection has already been attained. It is not merely an encapsulation of the Whig view of history; it comes close to suggesting that history as it is usually understood has come to a triumphant end in Wales.

Williams's historical article 'Some Particulars of the Parish of Glasbury'

'Some Particulars concerning the Parish of Glasbury in the Counties of Brecknock and Radnor, obtained from authentic documents, local tradition, books and personal observation'

was published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* in 1870 and its lengthy title is pedantically precise; it does not pretend to offer a history of Glasbury, but merely to present a few details which relate to it. Whereas *A History of Wales* had relied completely on antiquarian and other documents, Williams's sources here included oral tradition and "personal observation" (listed last, like her oblique reference to her own observation in *A History of Wales*) but the "authentic documents" predominate, occupying more than ten of the article's eighteen pages.

There is no introduction, no conclusion and no attempt to structure the documentary information nto a narrative; the article's purpose is to bring into the public domain documents from the seventeenth century, apparently in case the privately-owned originals were lost, damaged or destroyed. These documents are of local interest only; they include a petition to the bishop from parishioners in 1665 asking that a new church be built to replace one damaged by flood, and a detailed account of the parish boundaries. Internal evidence suggests how Williams came to have access to these documents; they had been among the papers left by the Rev John Hughes of Glasbury, and Williams's account of the lineage of the Hughes family ends with a reference to "his youngest daughter and co-heiress Isabella" - that is, she had been allowed to copy the documents while working as Isabella Hughes's companion more than a quarter of a century before.[xlii] Williams had apparently not felt impelled to publish - and possibly not to write - about these documents before; taken together, the date of their publication and the state of her health suggest that she saw them as unfinished business - possibly to pay a debt of gratitude to Isabella Hughes - and wanted to put them in the public domain while she was able to do so.

Williams's historical article 'Henry Williams of Ysgafell'

'An Account of Henry Williams of Ysgafell in the Parish of Llanllwchaiarn and County of Montgomeryshire, by his descendant, Jane Williams' was published in the *Transactions of the Powys-Land Club* in 1871; that is, in a journal of local history rather than one with the Wales-wide circulation of *Archaeologia Cambrensis.* Henry Williams of Ysgafell was a seventeenth-century Baptist minister who was persecuted after the Restoration because he could not in conscience accept the 1662 revisions to the *Book of Common Prayer* or take the Oath of Supremacy. Like 'Some Particulars of the Parish of Glasbury' the article uses information Williams had obtained many years earlier (in this case, information collected by her eldest brother in 1829), and depends on documentary sources.[xliii] What makes it different from the earlier article, and indeed all her other works, is the extent to which her emotional and psychological responses to her subject override the workings of her intellect. This lack of critical rigour is particularly obvious in relation to her presentation of Henry Williams's religious beliefs, and this will be discussed in the following chapter; at this point I wish to consider what it reveals about her approach to the writing of history.

As the second part of the title of *A History of Wales* demonstrated, Williams regarded it as vital that her historical writing should be objective, and presented the fact that it was "derived from Authentic Sources" as proof of this objectivity. In her Preface to *A History of Wales* she had explained that she used some sources because they were more "trustworthy" than others and had used "the best authorities", although she does not provide criteria; her claim indicates, however, that she had applied her critical judgment to potential sources and had found some acceptable and others wanting.[xliv] In her 1871 article, by contrast, she accepted as historical fact the claims in late-seventeenth-century eulogies to her ancestor which she knew could not be factually true.

On one occasion, her sources recorded, soldiers sent by magistrates, "plundered" Henry Williams's farm and stole his cattle and his harvested crops, so that his future prosperity depended on a field which the soldiers had neglected to lay waste; at harvest this field produced a "miraculous" crop of corn, with "two or three very good and full ears upon each stalk…it astonished all the country".[xlv] That Williams quotes from her sources at length is no great surprise, since this was her habitual technique, especially in her historical writing; what is remarkable - and revealing - in the context of the critical analysis to which she had subjected her previous sources is that rather than regarding the "miraculous" crop as an engaging folk-tale she attempts to provide evidence that it was technically possible, quoting from a book on the agriculture of the ancient Egyptians by Sir Gardner Wilkinson (whom she had met at Llanover) on a variety of similarly multi-eared wheat which was believed to have been the origin of the "seven-eared" corn in the Biblical story of Pharaoh's dream. Unfortunately, according to her further reading (in Lindley's *Encyclopaedia of Plants*), that particular species of wheat had not been introduced into Britain until 1799.[xlvi] Given her merciless attacks on illogicalities and factual impossibilities in her earlier writings, her comment on this anomaly is, to put it mildly, remarkable:

> [The multiple-eared wheat's] sudden and abundant appearance at Ysgafell more than a century earlier, to persons ignorant of the very existence of such a species, must, therefore, have been surprising and might reasonably under the circumstances be attributed to an especial Providence.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1871, p. 180)

Williams was careful to the point of pedantry in her choice of vocabulary and syntax, so that the implication in the first phrase of this sentence - that Henry Williams's "miraculous" crop in the 1680s was a variety of multiple-eared wheat unknown in Britain until 1799 - has to be taken at face value. Her readers are apparently being asked to accept that of all the fields in

all the farms in all the counties of Wales and in all the estates in Britain, that particular variety of wheat happened to manifest itself in the one undamaged field on her ancestor's farm at exactly the moment when its appearance would make most difference. Certainly her self-description in the article's title as its subject's descendant suggests that she might not treat his life and exploits with the objectivity she had aimed for in her *History of Wales,* but a tendency to interpret ambiguous or fragmentary information in her ancestor's favour would have been one thing; flying in the face of the evidence is another. The fact that she did so demonstrates her pride in an ancestor who figured in Welsh history and the importance to her of her family's connection over centuries with a particular piece of the land of Wales, even if none of her family had lived there for more than 150 years or owned it for nearly a century, and even if - as her article on Henry Williams suggests - she herself had never been to Ysgafell. The pride in the "Welsh descent" she had asserted in her application to the Royal Literary Fund, and its importance to her construction of her own identity, completely outweighed all her scholarly instincts and practice.

Conclusion

In her study of nineteenth-century historians in eastern central Europe, Monika Baár has examined the ways in which they used their writing of their national histories to assert their nations' individual national existence as a separate entity from the rest of the vast empires (Russian, Austro-Hungarian) in which they were embedded; she has further argued that in order to claim scholarly authority for their histories and to rebut any charges of partisan propaganda, they deliberately "retained a distance from the public…[and] dissociated themselves from their subject-matter and acted as detached narrators"[xlvii]. This was Williams's position and aim also in *A History of Wales*; the fact that she was writing it in

English, rather than in the unique national language of Wales, added a further element of distance. As this chapter has shown, however, it was as impossible for her as for any other historian to "act as [a] detached narrator"; her religious views distorted her understanding of the importance of the most significant single event in medieval Wales, and her account of Welsh history is the weaker for it.

Her reliance on "authentic sources" and documentary evidence reaches its apogee in 'Some Particulars of the Parish of Glasbury', where antiquarian documents of minimal interest even to local historians are included - at length, v*erbatim* - entirely because of their age; they apparently merit attention simply because they are old and have survived.

Williams's most revealing piece of historical writing, however, is undoubtedly her article on Henry Williams of Ysgafell. In her previous work she had been careful to evaluate the documents she used, and in the Preface to her biography of Carnhuanawc she had assured her readers that her information had "been carefully drawn from the most original and authentic sources, and in every instance where comparative evidence could be obtained it has been rigorously applied as a test to elicit truth"[xlviii]. By contrast, her account of her ancestor's life exhibits a refusal to evaluate her sources, and this fact in itself is evidence of a further change in the way she positioned herself in this period of her life in relation to Welsh identity.

The writing of *A History of Wales* was a patriotic service to the people of Wales, but it did not achieve great attention or significant sales. In her application to the Royal Literary Fund, two years after the book's publication, she hoped - rather forlornly - that the book "may ultimately prove remunerative"; it seems that only determined optimism could envisage its financial success.'[xlix] The state of her health, which may well have led her to oversimplify her conclusion to the book in sheer relief at the end of a lengthy and onerous task, meant that she would never again be able to embark on a similarly ambitious project. 'Some Particulars of

the Parish of Glasbury' might have represented the fulfilment of a moral obligation to Isabella Hughes, but it had required no creative or personal input from her, and certainly no emotional investment. By contrast, her article on Henry Williams - her last published prose work - seems to have been written only and entirely because she wanted to.

She had not lived in Wales for sixteen years, had only occasional contacts with the diminishing number of family members and friends who still lived there, and was out of touch with many of the events and concerns in contemporary Wales. For more than twenty years her writing career had focussed on Welsh subjects (with the single exception of *The Literary Women of England*), but her slackening ties with Wales meant that her identity as a writer, which had sustained her for nearly half a century, was threatened not only by her health and age, but by the loss of the involvement in Welsh life which had made it possible for her to write on Welsh topics which affected flesh-and-blood people. The two grounds of her claim to Welshness articulated in her application to the Royal Literary Fund - and written in the year her article on Henry Williams of Ysgafell was published - were "descent and long residence"; her "residence" was no longer in Wales, but her Welsh "descent" at least could not be challenged. Her article on Henry Williams became an assertion - to herself, as much as to the local historians of Powys - of her claim still to consider herself Welsh: a claim so important to her that critical rigour, the testing of "comparative evidence" and even "authentic sources" became irrelevant. Since she had moved to Wales nearly half a century before, she had found a succession of ways to achieve both a nuanced position in relation to Wales and a complex assertion of her Welsh identity. By the time she wrote her last prose work, emotion - powerful but forlorn - was all that remained.

Notes

i Her death occurred on 16th March 1885 and was registered on the 17th.

ii RLF MS, pp. 3, 5.

iii Jane Williams (1855), p. xii.

iv NLW MS 26/9, Monday October 20 and Thursday October 23, 1851; the latter gives an account of a riding accident in which Williams's right hip, thigh and knew were injured, and which would have made walking any distance even more difficult.

v I am very grateful to Dr Beryl Thomas, retired GP, the Church Surgery, Aberystwyth, for considering the medical evidence and giving me her opinion.

vi RLF MS, p. 5.

vii Neil Evans and Huw Pryce, 'Introduction', in Evans and Pryce, p. 8.

viii Benedict Anderson, *Imagied Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006 edn), p. 6.

ix Geoffrey Cubitt, ' Introduction' in *Imagining Nations* ed. by Geoffrey Cubitt (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 4.

x Quoted in Evans and Pryce, p. 3.

xi Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why?* (London: Routledge, repr. 1998), pp. 13-22.

xii Cubitt, pp. 2, 9.

xiii Arthur Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 74.

xiv This section is based on Grace Jones, 'Early Modern Welsh Nationalism and British History', in *Writing Wales from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. by Stewart Mottram and Sarah Prescott (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 21-38.

xv Sidney Lee (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography* Vol. 61 (London: Smith and Elder, 1901), p. 411.

xvi Neil Evans and Huw Pryce, pp. 25, 29.

xvii Quoted in Evans and Pryce, p. 5.

xviii E. C. Campbell, *Stories from the History of Wales* (Shrewsbury: printed by J. Eddowes, 1833), pp. 101, 158.

xix B. B. Woodward, *The History of Wales from the earliest times to its final incorporation with the Kingdom of England* (London: Virtue and Co., 1853), pp. 171, 240.

xx See Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity: Ancient Britons and the Romantic Imagination* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 113-27.

xxi R. W. Morgan, *The British Kymry, or Britons of Cambria* (Carnarvon: H. Humphreys, 1857), pp. vii, 8-9.

xxii Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, 'Conclusion: Picking up the Threads' in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. by Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), p. 531.

xxiii William Warrington, *The History of Wales in nine books* (London: J. Johnson, 1786), pp. 556-7, 535.

xxiv Stefan Berger, 'Conclusion', in Evans and Pryce, p. 304.

xxv Huw Pryce, *J. E. Lloyd and the Creation of Welsh History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p. 49.

xxvi David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (London: Viking, 1997), p.120.

xxvii See, for example, Rev. Thomas Price (Carnhuanawc), *Hanes Cymry: a Chenedl y Cymry, o'r Oesoedd hyd at Farwolaeth Llewelyn ap Gruffydd: ynghyd a Rhai Cofiaint Perthynol i'r Amseroedd o'r Pryd Hynny i Waered* (Crickhowell: Thomas Williams, 1842); David Lowenthal, p. 120.

xxviii Lowenthal, p. 107.

xxix Jane Williams (1869), p. 24.

xxx Thomas Price, p. 98.

xxxi Jane Williams (1869), pp. 49, 39, 47.

xxxii Ibid, pp. 46-7, 49.

xxxiii Ibid, p. 51.

xxxiv Thomas Price, p. 275.

xxxv Huw Pryce, p. 82.

xxxvi Jane Williams (1869), p. 421.

xxxvii Ibid, pp. 93, 274.

xxxviii Ibid, pp. 490-93.

xxxix D. M. and E. M. Lloyd, pp. 139-41.

xl Jane Williams (1869), p. 483.

xli Thomas Price, p. 795.

xlii Jane Williams (1870), pp. 313, 321.

xliii Jane Williams (1871), pp. 179-80; see also NLW MS 24051F, f. 38.

xliv Jane Williams (1869), pp. vii, xiii.

xlv Jane Williams (1871), pp. 178, 177.

xlvi Ibid, p. 180.

xlvii Monika Baár, *Historians and Nationalism: East Central Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 52.

xlviii Jane Williams (1855), p. ix.

xlix RLF MS p. 5.

CHAPTER 9

Jane Williams and religion

Chapters 2-8 have examined each of Jane Williams's published works separately, in chronological order; this chapter will consider a subject which was of great concern and interest to her throughout her life: religion. I will argue that the religious references in her work reveal deep anxiety and insecurity, which reflects the embattled position of the Church of England during her lifetime; further, that some of them show the extent to which the careful adherence to 'facts' of her other prose writings could be thrown off-balance by her emotional response to her subject. This is particularly obvious when she is discussing matters Welsh; her religious writings and references indicate the centrality of religion not only to her personal identity, but to the way she positioned herself in relation to Wales. This chapter will argue that religion was important to her as the one constant element in her life when so many others - geographical location, social class, financial status, cultural and literary involvement - underwent fundamental and repeated changes, and that holding to the faith of her childhood represented her only surviving contact with the secure and affluent world of her youth that was still available to her. It will demonstrate that Williams had such a deep emotional investment in her religious beliefs that if logic or hard fact threatened to undermine them she convinced herself that truth was whatever she wanted to believe it was.

Williams's religious position

Williams was indubitably an Anglican throughout her life, but since the Church of England is proverbially a broad church, this statement inevitably raises the question: what sort of Anglican? An anecdote in her memoir of a childhood game which she and her siblings devised, and an elegy for her step-grandmother, both suggest something of the religious atmosphere in which she grew up, and which influenced her religious views for the rest of her life. This memoir was published in 1856 when she was fifty years old, but it looks back to a point before her family members were dispersed after the loss of their money.[i] The book describes the way in which she and her siblings created a miniature paper version of the society in which they lived, including institutions such as the Houses of Parliament, the Law Courts, the Bank of England and government departments as well as shops, houses, cities, country estates and railways. The fact that the Williams children chose to make a pedantically-accurate miniature version of the world in which they lived, rather than create something new and imaginatively different, as did the Brontë children, suggests not only the power of their socialisation (and that their personalities were more conventional than the Brontës'), but a need to cling for reassurance to the institutions of their world, under the contemporary threat from revolutionary and atheist France.[ii] The world the Williams children created was explicitly founded upon conventional ideas of the period about the basis of a successful society; Williams comments that the laws of their paper world "originated in the conviction that order and restraint were essential to the security and peace of social life".[iii]

Tellingly, the only institution not represented in their paper Lilliput was the Church of England, exactly because its role was too important and too serious to be part of a children's game:

> There are no churches. There was a time when we had one, and a paper clergyman used to read the Church of England Liturgy on Sundays: but our mother once coming in suddenly during the celebration was so shocked at this profanation of the service that we afterwards substituted some passages from Dodsley's Economy of Human Life and gradually relinquished the observance altogether, finding religion too good for paper people, and not choosing to make them polytheists.
>
> (Jane Williams, 1856, Pt. II, pp. 14-15)

This is the only point in Williams's account when the children's paper world made connections with the real one; Dodsley's *The Economy of Human Life*, a collection of moral precepts first published in 1750, was appropriate since it inculcated morality without possessing the sacred character of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Williams wrote her account over thirty-five years after the events she described, but its liveliness and level of detail suggest that when compiling it she was imaginatively and psychologically back in the world of her childhood. The assumptions of the passage quoted above - that the Church of England represented "true religion" and that the only possible religious choices were between its doctrines and polytheism (which was clearly such a ridiculous notion as to be unworthy of even a moment's consideration) - are therefore likely to reflect the religious position of the family she grew up in.

Williams's elegy for Jane Marsh, her step-grandmother, indicates the pervasive role of religion in her upbringing: Jane Marsh had been part of the household since Williams's childhood. The poem pays tribute to Marsh's religious influence and moral example:

> The fear of God, good will to man
> Her practice and her precept taught,
> Through every well-spent moment ran
> All true and honourable thought.

('Verses occasioned by the Death of Mrs Jane Marsh, the Author's Grandmother')[iv]

The emphasis which this places on the moral duty constantly to examine one's conscience, and the importance it implicitly gives to the Scriptures where the "precepts" to guide this examination are to be found, both suggest that Williams's childhood home was 'Low' rather than 'High' church, a grouping within Anglicanism which emphasised reliance on the text of the Bible, on making the conscience of the individual believer the touchstone of belief and behaviour, and on simplicity of life and worship. Some of her writings also suggest an understanding of and sympathy with the position of Evangelicals within the Anglican Church, who placed an even greater emphasis on a strong personal faith, vigorous self-examination of conscience, and a "determination to be faithful to the Protestant Reformation".[v]

The earliest indication of Williams's personal beliefs appears on the title page of her tract *Brief Remarks* (the first-person plural pronoun is presumably an example of the 'editorial we'):

> We hold the Articles and Homilies of our National Church: that Church to which England owes her vernacular Scriptures, and that noble charter of Protestant Liberty contained in her Sixth Article.
>
> (Williams, 1839, title page)

Williams's credo has a particular relevance in the context of the debates in 1833-4 to disestablish the Church of England, or at least to revise some of the Thirty-Nine Articles; it declares support for a group of doctrines drawn up more than 250 years earlier in the very different religious and political circumstances of 1562.[vi] Her reference to the Sixth Article ('On the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for Salvation') suggests that she shared the view of the primacy of the text of the Bible particularly associated with Evangelicals within the

Church of England, while her emphasis on the importance of the vernacular Scriptures (English as opposed to Latin, in the context of the period when the Articles were drawn up) is reflected later in her Letters to London newspapers criticising English-speaking Anglican clergy in Wales for being unable to preach in the language of their monoglot Welsh congregations. In the context of the period, "that noble [religious] charter" is likely to be a slighting implication that the political Charter (drawn up in the second half of the 1830s, which demanded electoral reform and greater parliamentary democracy and whose aims were seen as dangerously revolutionary by many members of the middle and upper classes) was by contrast ignoble; the reference to "Protestant Liberty' asserts the freedom of the established religion of the British state - "our National Church" - from (Roman Catholic) thraldom to foreign creeds and rulers. While her credo is ostensibly a proud and confident assertion of her belief in the centrality of the Church of England to national religious life, her choice of its wording, and her need to make her belief explicit, are both very defensive.

Her defensiveness reflects the way in which Anglicans of this period felt that their beliefs were challenged and attacked from both within and without. The three main challenges to its dominance which her writings reflect were Roman Catholicism, the growth of Dissenting Protestant churches, and the advances in science which threatened to undermine the literal truth of the Bible, and I wish now to consider Williams's responses to each of them in turn.

Williams and anti-Catholicism

During Williams's formative years Roman Catholic emancipation was a topic of deep and fierce debate. The 1801 Act of Union which united Ireland to the kingdom of England, Wales and Scotland had brought the subject into sharp focus; over three-quarters of the population of Ireland were Catholics, and the new state of the two combined kingdoms had to modify its

religious policy in order to remain (more or less) unified.[vii] The popular anti-Catholic feeling which had led to the Gordon Riots in 1780 remained undimmed, however.[viii] It was not until 1829 that the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed, and only then against heavy opposition: both the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel spoke against the measure, and George IV sobbed as he signed the Act into force.[ix]

Owen Chadwick has suggested that anti-Catholicism grew in Britain from the mid-1830s onwards because Catholicism "stopped trying to be unnoticeable" as a result of the 1829 Emancipation Act.[x] The growth of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s and 1840s was particularly alarming because its leaders were Anglicans; it was felt to exemplify 'the enemy within'. The early 1850s saw anti-Catholic riots in London, and Britain become even more conscious of its Protestantism as a defining national characteristic; since God had given Britain great economic, military and political power throughout the world, it followed that the spread of British Protestant Christianity was divinely ordained.[xi] At a church service in April 1854 to mark the declaration of war against Russia at the outbreak of the Crimean War, an Anglican clergyman urged his congregation to thank God "that we are not as other nations are: unjust, covetous, oppressive, cruel; we are a religious people, we are a Bible-reading, church-going people, we send missionaries into all the earth' "[xii]. The Pharisaical tendency of the Church of England was alive and well and sufficiently confident to express itself in public.

Some parts of Britain were more determinedly Protestant than others: Wales had been a bastion of Protestantism and anti-Catholicism since the Reformation. Paul O' Leary has demonstrated "the pervasive presence of anti-Catholic sentiment" in nineteenth-century Wales, and the frequent use by the religious press of epithets such as 'The Beast' (Y Bwystfi) and 'the Whore' (Y Butain) for the Catholic Church and 'the Anti-Christ (Yr Annghrist) for the Pope.[xiii] (This paranoia bore no relation to the actual size of the Catholic population in

Wales; the 'Religious Census' of 1851 indicated that only 0.8% of worshippers attended Roman Catholic services, in contrast to 20% for Anglicans).[xiv] The prospect of Catholic emancipation led to meetings and petitions against the measure all over Wales, and the arrival during the late 1840s of tens of thousands of destitute and starving Irish immigrants as a result of the Great Famine increased this paranoia. O'Leary makes the interesting point that while there were sectarian divisions in cities such as Cardiff, Swansea and Newport during the 1850s and 1860s, anti-Catholicism persisted particularly strongly in most parts of rural Wales. Williams's experience of living in Wales for nearly thirty-five years was almost entirely in rural Breconshire, and her writings exhibit vehement and often gratuitous anti-Catholicism. The views on Catholics and Catholicism in *The Autobiography of Elizabeth Davis*, *The Literary Women of England* and *A History of Wales* show that Williams regarded the Roman Catholic faith as a threat to salvation and spiritual health, in relation both to an individual and to a nation.

The Autobiography of Betsy Cadwaladyr accuses the Catholic Church of hypocrisy (by "passing a piece of meat through water" it officially became a piece of fish, and therefore could be eaten on Fridays) and of being willing to grant absolution if its clergy were paid enough; Williams includes long anecdotes about the cupidity of a Roman Catholic Bishop and shows other senior Catholic clergy breaking the Church's regulation when paid enough.[xv] Her description of a service in the royal chapel at Rio de Janeiro is even more pointed; the Brazilian royal party, including the emperor and empress, "threw [themselves] down upon the ground, made a noise like a dying dog, and crawled along", while "the congregation shrieked" and "an old friar got a thing like the head of an eight-day clock [a monstrance] and played bo-peep with it at the altar", at which there was "loud howling through all the congregation". Cadwaladyr's later reflections on the service make her Protestant reactions explicit: "Christianity and Heathenism were mixed together in such ceremonies as I had just

witnessed, the largest part belonging to Heathenism.[xvi] This denigration of Catholicism also informs Williams's depiction of the faith of individual Catholic writers in *The Literary Women of England*, where it is attributed to bad influences in youth which could, in the right circumstances, be remedied later; for example, Catherine Trotter Cockburn was open to the influence of a Roman Catholic teacher when young because "she had not been trained to early piety", but she later redeemed herself (literally) by "her staunch adherence to the orthodox faith of the Church of England" and married an Anglican clergyman.[xvii]

Williams had to accept that Catholicism was unavoidable for those who had lived before the Reformation, although she regarded joining the Church for any reason other than ambition (for example, Giraldus Cambrensis) as risible; she recounts that after an outbreak of the plague, king Rhydderch Hael became a monk in "a superstitious panic".[xviii] The fate of a nation, however, could not be treated so lightly and Williams's religious partisanship seriously distorts her view of history; as discussed in Chapter 8, she presents the Reformation rather than the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd as the most significant event in Welsh history.

Since Henry VIII was responsible for establishing the Church of England he was necessarily heroic in Williams's eyes, in spite of the effect of the 'language clause' of the 1536 Act of Union. To her Henry VIII was not himself a Protestant (as her comments in relation to Anne Askew, discussed in Chapter 8, show) and should not be given credit for establishing Protestantism in England and Wales; he did the right thing for the wrong reasons, and was merely an instrument of the divine plan to establish true Protestantism in Britain. To a nineteenth-century Anglican like Williams, who saw the Roman Catholic Church, like the devil in the biblical Epistle, walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom it might devour, it was necessary always to be on guard against the treacherous and insidious enemy.

Williams's view of other denominations

If Catholicism was the greatest existential threat to the Church of England in the early part of the nineteenth century, Anglicanism was also under siege from other Protestant denominations - particularly so in Wales, where Williams lived from her late teenage years to her late forties. Some Protestant denominations were certainly more acceptable than others; one notable element of religious life in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Wales was the closeness between Methodism and the Anglicanism from which it had grown; Howell Harris, for example, regarded as one of the pioneers of Welsh Methodism, remained loyal to the Church of England and continued to believe that the Thirty-Nine Articles were "theologically sound".[xix] Williams's account of Daniel Rowland of Llangeitho, another founding father of Methodism in Wales, emphasises that he had been an ordained Anglican minister until he was forced out of the Church, and that "his attachment to the Church of England" remained steadfast until his dying day.[xx] She was, however, very aware that members of the Anglican Church were outnumbered almost four to one by members of Dissenting Churches in Wales, and felt strongly that Methodism (and other Protestant denominations) would not have been able to gain such a large following in Wales if the Anglican Church had not been so negligent.[xxi] One of Harris's comments on the Church of England - "though it is corrupt, 'tis our Mother" - would certainly have had great resonance for her; it epitomises the attitude to the Anglican Church in Wales expressed with a great sense of anger and outrage in her letters to London newspapers.[xxii]

Her letters argue for the use of the "vernacular Scriptures" in Wales, as in England. Anglican bishops in Wales were Englishmen; no Welsh speaker became bishop of a Welsh see between 1702 and 1870. Roger L. Brown has pointed out that the reasons were partly to do with social class; the majority of Welsh-speaking clergymen came from the *gwerin*, were educated at provincial theological colleges (such as St Davids, Lampeter) and were commonly regarded

as "lacking the social refinements and elegant English" necessary for a member of the House of Lords who moved in aristocratic and government circles in London.[xxiii] The result was that bishops regularly appointed to Welsh livings were Englishmen who knew no Welsh and saw no reason to try to learn. That this policy was not (or not entirely) the result of ignorance or neglect is demonstrated by the fact that the clause in the 1836 Established Church Bill which required the Church Commissioners to prepare plans to ensure that men appointed to Welsh-speaking parishes and sees would be "conversant" with Welsh was defeated by an amendment proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.[xxiv]

Williams's letters rail against the consequences: "[Welsh] parishes [were] grossly neglected by their respective ministers, who were wholly ignorant of the only language in which the people were capable of receiving instruction".[xxv] She also attacks the abuse of patronage by some of the English bishops in Wales who appointed friends and relations to (sometimes several) richly-endowed Welsh livings, declaring that "the extensive, continuous and shameless abuse of this concentrated power" had led to "the ruin of the Anglican church in Wales".[xxvi] The result, in her view, was that Dissenting churches, especially Methodist, were growing in Wales because they conducted their services in Welsh and were in every sense closer to the Welsh people than middle-class Anglican clergy, and that "The church in Wales has sunk into torpor, and is gradually decomposing for want of life".[xxvii] As a lifelong Anglican and a Welsh patriot, she was deeply pained by the present of the Anglican Church in Wales, and fearful for its future.

All her letters to London newspapers were published anonymously, and her choice of pseudonyms - probably inexplicable to most of the newspapers' readers - is very revealing in terms of how she regarded herself in relation to Wales: 'Goleufer', 'Gorbonian', 'Peredur' and 'Elidure'. 'Goleufer' translates as 'bringer of light', while the other pseudonyms use the names of characters from Welsh mythology or literature.[xxviii] In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*

Regum Britanniae Gorbonianus was a wise and just king of Cambria who protected his people from the abuses of their lords; and while Peredur is probably best known as the eponymous hero of a medieval Welsh romance which tells the story of a knight on a noble quest (the resemblance to Artegall, also a literary knightly hero who fought for justice, is probably not coincidental), and Elidwr is the protagonist of an anecdote from Giraldus Cambrensis which Williams had used for a poem in *Celtic Fables* (discussed in Chapter 7), it may also be significant that Peredur and Elidur were two younger brothers of Gorbonianus who as monarchs demonstrated the virtues of peace, moderation and loyalty.[xxix] Another possible source for the pseudonym Elidure is the twelfth-century poet Elidur Sais, whose surviving poems express strong religious faith and criticise contemporary rulers severely, and who is said to have acquired his epithet 'Sais' (Englishman) because of the years he spent in exile in England.[xxx] This would have been extremely appropriate for Williams, not only because part of her life had been spent in England but because she positions herself in these letters as a commentator sufficiently familiar with both Wales and England to be able to explain institutions and events in one country to inhabitants of the other. Poems by Elidur Sais are among the Iolo Manuscripts which Hall had bought from Iolo's son Taliesin, and Williams would have had access to them in the Llanover library.

Williams's use of distinctively Welsh pseudonyms allowed her to present herself as a knowledgeable commentator on the Anglican Church in Wales whose criticisms should be taken seriously. Her views on what the clergy in Wales should not be and not do were very clear; her views on what they should be are not made explicit. She does, however, present a positive model in her picture of the life and work of the Rev. Thomas Price 'Carnhuanawc' in her biography of him. She shows him as modest, gentle and self-sacrificing, giving a large proportion of his small income to the sick and needy, dedicating his life to the service of his parishioners and, when necessary, using his greater education and status to argue their case

with "the wealthy and powerful".[xxxi] He also, of course, had the merit of being a native Welsh speaker who shared the social and cultural values of the community he lived in.

In terms of doctrines and religious practice, Carnhuanawc, like Williams herself, was a member of the 'Low Church' grouping within the Church of England. The anecdote from her memoir of childhood and her elegy on Jane Marsh indicate that her early religious formation reflected this, and her later writings show that she remained constant in this allegiance throughout her adult life. Her choice of nomenclature provides a particularly strong clue: whereas the most important sacrament was (as a general rule) 'Eucharist' in the Roman Catholic Church, 'Holy Communion' in the Church of England and 'the Lord's Supper' in Dissenting Churches, Williams uses 'the Lord's Supper.'[xxxii] The Anglican Book of Common Prayer uses both 'the Lord's Supper' and 'Holy Communion' in the title of the order of its service, but the rubric of the service itself uses only 'Holy Communion', which was therefore the name used most often by Anglicans; Kenneth Hylson-Smith, however, makes the point that Evangelicals within the Church of England during the nineteenth century used both terms so that Williams's usage suggests an ideological sympathy with the Evangelical wing of the Church.[xxxiii] This sympathy is also seen in her whole-hearted praise for the religious tracts by the Evangelical Hannah More, both for their spiritual effects ("the obvious and instant good they did was incalculable") and their practical contribution to the maintenance of public order: "More's [pamphlet entitled] 'Riot' was known to have been the means of suppressing dangerous tumults at Bath and at Hull".[xxxiv] Williams's tracts were far less successful. Her first, *Twenty Essays on the Practical Improvement of God's Providential Dispensation as Means of Moral Discipline to the Christian* was published anonymously in 1838, and detailed work on its text has led me to the conclusions that Williams did not write Essays I-VI, that she may have written up Essays VII-XI from the notes of another writer, and that only her authorship of Essays XII-XX, possibly on subjects chosen by another person, is secure. I

discuss my reasons for these conclusions in Appendix I, and suggest the identity of the other writer in Appendix II.

Her second tract, *Brief Remarks on a Tract entitled 'A Call to the Converted'* (1839) was written in response to a pamphlet by William George Lambert, a member of the Plymouth Brethren, which had been published in 1831; her riposte shows that for Williams some religious groupings were too far from Anglicanism to be treated respectfully. Her aim is less to engage in thoughtful and nuanced debate of differences of doctrine and religious practice between the Church of England and the Plymouth Brethren than to attack an opponent whose smugness and weakness of both logic and syntax make him vulnerable to mockery; it is less informative about her religious views than about her pleasure in destructive criticism. Unitarians were another group beyond the pale, since they were regarded by other denominations as non-Christian because they did not accept the doctrine of the Trinity. Unfortunately for Williams, she admired the writing of Laeitita Barbauld - and Barbauld was a Unitarian.

Williams's account of Barbauld's life and work shows the difficulties which Barbauld's religious allegiance created for her.[xxxv] She admired Barbauld as a teacher and educational writer, and had a strong response to her religious poems ("the[ir] devotional spirit, the faith, hope and charity of the verse, breathe essential Christianity"); she found this strong response deeply unsettling, however, since the religious poetry that evoked it had been written by a poet whose religious beliefs were beyond the pale. Williams solved her dilemma by deciding that Barbauld's was only superficially a Unitarian: Barbauld's heart, she declared, "could not receive the dogmas which her biased mind adopted. Her notional religion was Unitarian, her experimental piety [i.e. in the words of the subtitle to one of Hannah More's tracts, "the influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Conduct of the Life"] was Trinitarian, and true Christianity".[xxxvi] Since Anglicanism was the only true faith, Williams knew it would be

impossible for her to feel *rapport* for a non-Anglican; it followed logically, therefore, that anyone for whom she felt *rapport* had to be an Anglican at bottom.

Williams's religious beliefs and the challenge of the new sciences

The existence of the Roman Catholic and Dissenting Churches were not the only challenges to the hegemony of the Church of England. A further threat to its beliefs entered popular consciousness in Britain during the nineteenth century: the implications of advances in scientific - and especially geological - research. Since a fundamental Christian doctrine saw the Bible as literally the word of God, any discovery or theory which undermined any part of it - for example, the story of the creation of the world in the first chapter of the book of Genesis - undermined the truth of the whole, with appalling implications for conventional believers. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries questions raised by theoretical and scientific advances (by Newton, Descartes, Erasmus Darwin, Robert Hooke, Lamarck and John Ray, for example), and the research of mineralogists and mine-surveyors such as James Hutton and William Smith had presented tangible and apparently irrefutable evidence that the creation of the world had taken far longer than the account in Genesis allowed, and far earlier than the date of 4004 B. C. established by Archbishop Usher in the seventeenth century - a date regarded as sufficiently authoritative to be included in a marginal note to the official Anglican 'King James' translation of the Bible.[xxxvii] The first decades of the nineteenth century, however, saw a retreat from such adventurous notions back to accepted Anglican beliefs; the tumults, crises and dangers to British national existence and form of government represented by the atheism and republicanism of Revolutionary France and its supporters, and by civil unrest in Britain in the years that followed the Napoleonic wars, resulted in a return to the psychological comfort of traditional forms of belief and society.

The questions posed by competing views of human society and existence could not be unthought, but a theory which presented the new knowledge of the natural world and traditional religious beliefs as complementary rather than antagonistic was certain to receive a relieved welcome from many Anglicans. *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of Attributes of the Deity* (1802) by the Rev. William Paley (his position as an Anglican clergyman reassuring in itself) argued that the existence of everything in the world, including recent scientific discoveries, demonstrated the existence of a divine creator; as proof, he offered the analogy of the watch. Anyone seeing a watch, Paley argued - even a savage who came across one for the first time by chance - would recognise that its complex mechanism and precisely-interacting parts could not have come about by accident; the watch must have been consciously and deliberately made (the analogy did not, however, go so far as to consider that a watch of that period needed to be wound regularly in order to continue to function, whereas the natural world has the capacity to sustain its own operation).[xxxviii] Paley's analogy of the watch became an important part of the intellectual weaponry of Anglicans with traditional beliefs, and while Williams does not refer directly to him or his exemplary time-piece, her contributions to *Twenty Essays* indicate that she knew his theory well enough for it to have become part of her mental furniture. In Essay XVI she declares that Cowper's biographer, Haley, "understood Cowper's religious principles no better than a savage does a watch"; in Essay XVIII she observes that just as viewing a work of art produces admiration of "the maker's ingenuity", so in the natural world and in what humans have made of it we see "new tokens of the great Creator's wisdom"; and in Essay XIX she remarks that "we naturally trace a work to its author, an effect to its cause".[xxxix] These references make clear a point which her later works reinforce: that she possessed a deep intellectual interest in advances in science as in other academic disciplines, and that she read widely and absorbed the new theories of the creation of the world and the creatures in it.

As scientific research continued, however, traditional Anglicans like Williams were presented with greater, and increasingly more radical, challenges to their faith. The discovery and identification of fossils, for example, presented an enormous problem: they had the appearance of living things but were made of stone, they included unmistakeable sea-creatures found on dry (sometimes, arid) land, and most of them showed creatures which were now extinct. To those who believed that God had created every living thing complete and perfect in six days and had rested on the seventh, the evidence provided by their existence - if accepted - undermined one of the most important passages of the Bible, and a refutation of any part of the Scriptures destroyed faith in the literal truth of the whole. To many, science seemed to offer the answers which religion was increasingly unable to provide; Keith Thomson suggests that "in various guises and under different names, what we call 'evolution' had been in the air for at least two hundred years" before Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859.[xl] Further, he argues that by the middle decades of the nineteenth century, 'natural theologians' dealt with the evidence that the world was millions of years old and that life on earth had constantly changed over time in three ways: by ignoring it, attempting (unsuccessfully) to reconcile geology with the Bible, or explaining it away. Philip Henry Gosse, for example, a member of the Plymouth Brethren, argued that God had made Adam at the same time as the earth and everything on it, down to fossils (the divine purpose of the fossils was not divulged).[xli] But 'natural theologians' were increasingly fighting a losing battle; other writers felt able to write, and publishers to publish, suggestions that the Bible was best seen as a repository of myths rather than literal truth - for example, David Friedrich Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (first published in 1835 and translated into English by George Eliot in 1846) and Baden Powell's *The Connexion of Natural and Divine Truth* (1838) - and the intellectual impetus was with them rather than with those who clung to the ideas of the past.[xlii]

Williams's response to the theological difficulties posed by the results of geological and other research is not made explicit; the sparse references in her work to the protagonists in these debates, however, as well as their character, suggests her views were close to those of the 'natural' theologians. In the Introduction to *The Literary Women of England* she first likens her attempt to delineate the characters of the writers in the book to the approach of a portrait painter, and then adds "though often in the earlier chapters [she was] constrained perforce to piece them out as Professor Owen does the fragments of extinct species".[xliii] Richard Owen, one of the fiercest critics of all theories which led to evolution, had the intellectual authority of a high-ranking member of the scientific establishment, as Hunterian Professor in the Royal College of Surgeons; a comparative anatomist, he was strongly opposed to any suggestion of mutability in species.[xliv] Throughout the debates provoked by *On the Origin of Species* Owen opposed both Darwin's theory of evolution and the Darwinist hypothesis of a relation between humans and other primates on the grounds of significant differences between the cerebral structures of gorillas and humans.[xlv] By referring to Owen by name and comparing her work to his a year after this debate and two years after the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Williams was giving a clear signal of support for his interpretation of the way "fragments of extinct species" related to current forms rather than that of Darwin and his supporters.

Williams's references to two other protagonists in the evolution debate appear in her last book, *A History of Wales derived from Authentic Sources*; in both cases she uses them as sources for factual information, and their relevance to her own views comes rather from the proof they provide that she knew their work than for a comment, however oblique, on the debate itself. She uses evidence adduced in lectures by Sir Roderick Murchison and Charles Lyell to support her own conclusions on the remains of Roman fortifications and the earlier courses of the estuaries of the Dee and Severn; both references appear in footnotes.[xlvi] Like

Owen, both men were members of the scientific establishment: Murchison was consecutively the President of the Royal Geographical Society and of the Geological Society, while Lyell was Professor of Geology at Kings College London and the author of two of the most influential books on the origins of the world and its human inhabitants, *The Principles of Geology* (1830) and *The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* (1863).[xlvii] Whereas Lyell had become increasingly convinced by the emerging geological evidence that much of the British Isles had once been under ice-sheets hundreds of metres thick, Murchison used his position as President of the Geological Society to make "a vitriolic and extended attack on [this] glacial theory and its protagonists" in 1842.[xlviii] Lyell, however, could go so far and no further. Even when he came to accept the evidence that forms of life had evolved over time he could not bring himself to make this explicit; in *The Geological Evidences for the Antiquity of Man* he succeeded in presenting the idea of human evolution to the public while withholding his own opinions, so that he was able to escape the attacks directed at Darwin[xlix]. The fact that Williams used material from relatively obscure publications by both Murchison and Lyell - the printed versions of the 'Speech delivered at the Meeting of the Cambrian Archaeological Society, held at Ludlow in August 1852', and the 'Address to the British Association at Bath, 1864', respectively - suggests that she was probably familiar with their other works as well; and while it is always dangerous to infer too much from the presence of an absence, in context the complete lack of reference to the work of Darwin and his supporters is probably deliberate.[l] Of the three writers she mentions, two were deniers of the theory of evolution and the third was a man who could not bring himself to admit publicly that he accepted it; Williams's position seems to have been one of clinging to the vestiges of 'natural' theology and hoping that theories which challenged it would go away.

Inconsistencies and contradictions in Williams's religious position

It was possible for Williams to avoid confronting the contradictory nature of her responses to Barbauld's poetry - that she could not help admiring writing which doctrinally she should not have admired - because only a very small proportion of Barbauld's verse presented her with theological difficulties[li]. Her treatment of another object of respect and admiration who held the 'wrong' religious views presented greater difficulties; like a 'natural' theologian confronted by geological evidence that disproved cherished beliefs, she attempted to reconcile indisputable evidence with what she wanted to be true, and ignored the consequent inconsistences and contradictions. Whereas her other works demonstrate her to be a writer who gave painstaking - at times, pedantic - attention to textual evidence, her treatment of her seventeenth-century ancestor Henry Williams of Ysgafell, a Baptist minister persecuted by the civil authorities after the Restoration, reveals the extent to which her emotional and psychological responses to her subject could override the workings of her intellect, and her sectarianism overcome irrefutable evidence. Discussion of this essay in Chapter 8 has shown how Williams's personal involvement with its subject led her to take highly-suspect statements in her sources at face value rather than to assess their credibility. Her description of Henry Williams's religious beliefs takes this lack of critical rigour to a further level, by actively misinterpreting her source-material in order to draw conclusions which fitted her own religious bias and psychological needs.

Since no writings by Henry Williams himself survived, Williams had to rely on other textual sources as evidence of his religious and political position. He was known to have been a close friend and protégé of Vavasor Powell, the Welsh Baptist minister and Fifth Monarchy Man who, like Henry Williams, was imprisoned during the reign of Charles II for preaching without the licence available only to those who accepted the revised Anglican Book of Common Prayer; and Powell left substantial - indeed, copious - accounts of his religious

beliefs and their political implications (*God the Father Glorified*, 1649; *Christ and Moses Excellency*, 1650; *Christ Exalted*, 1651; *A Word for God*, 1655; *The Bird in the Cage Chirping*, 1661; *Divine Love*, 1667, among others). Williams's essay assumes that Henry Williams shared Powell's views in every respect, so that she can use the latter's writings as a guide to the former's beliefs; the forcefulness with which Powell argues his religious and political position, and his certainty that he was completely right about everything, always, make this assumption entirely reasonable, since it is impossible to imagine that anyone who did not agree with him on every last detail could have become, and remained, as close to him as Henry Williams clearly was.[lii]

Since the bibliography Williams provides demonstrates that she had read extensively in Powell's own writings as well as about him it has to be assumed that she was fully aware of his religious beliefs, so that her statement that "[Powell's and Henry Williams's] confession of faith agreed with the doctrinal articles of the Church of England" has to be a deliberate inaccuracy.[liii] If Powell and Henry Williams had been able to accept "the doctrinal articles of the Church of England" (i. e. the Thirty-Nine Articles) they would have been able in good conscience to make a public declaration that they accepted the Anglican Book of Common Prayer as revised in 1662 - and in that case they would not have fallen foul of the Act of Uniformity, would have received licences to preach, and therefore would not have been liable to prosecution.[liv] Williams, however, goes even further; her summary of their religious beliefs reveals even more clearly their divergence from Anglican doctrines:

> They preferred adult to infant baptism and objected to episcopacy, tithes and forms of prayer. They held the unlawfulness of war, oaths, and of capital punishments. They considered themselves and all others to be entitled to the exercise of civil and religious liberty; and, associating the idea of oppression with that of monarchical government, they professed a general preference for republican institutions.

(Williams, 1871, p. 171)

This accurately represents Powell's views, which directly contradict the Articles of the Church of England to which Williams had just declared Powell and Henry Williams subscribed.[lv] The Articles expressly require infant, not adult, baptism (Article XXVII), make explicit the authority of bishops and archbishops (XXXVI), decree punishment for anyone who sets up their own "private judgement" on forms of worship against the Anglican Church's (XXXIV), permit military service (XXXVII) and the swearing of oaths (XXXIX), assert that only the Church of England can make judgements on matters of faith (XX), and declare that "the King's Majesty" has the right given by God "to rule all estates and degrees" (XXXVII). Article XXIII also prohibits anyone who has not been "lawfully called" to the role by "men who have publick authority" from "tak[ing] on himself the office of publick preaching or ministering the Sacraments"; only deliberate distortion of the meaning of this Article could permit Powell and Henry Williams to preach and hold services without a licence.[lvi]

It would have been possible for Williams to gloss over the differences between their beliefs and the tenets of the Church of England if she had omitted all mention of the Thirty Nine Articles. If she had focused on doctrines shared by Anglicans and Baptists at that period (for example: the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the redemption of sins, the centrality of the Scriptures), the gulf between their beliefs and those of orthodox Anglicans like herself (the 1662 Book of Common Prayer was in use throughout her lifetime) could have been put out of sight, however unconvincingly to those who knew some church history. But Williams clearly felt respect for her ancestor's determination to remain true to his conscience, admiration for his refusal to compromise despite the hardship and suffering inflicted on him and his family, and pride that because of this he figured in the religious history of seventeenth-century Wales. She proudly identified herself on the title page of the essay as "his descendant", and

her essay suggests that she wanted to feel that her kinship with him was not only a matter of pedigree but also that their religious beliefs were identical.[lvii] In order to do this, she had to abandon completely the scholarly rigour which informed her other historical writing; given that the subject of her essay was so definitely and defiantly a Puritan, it is ironic that her approach to his life and beliefs is extraordinarily cavalier.

Conclusion

Any discussion of Williams's religious views needs to examine them along two separate axes: the position of the Church of which she was a member, and her own personal religious faith. Her view of the position of the Church of England was essentially totalitarian: that as the Established Church it formed one of the two pillars of society - the other being the monarchy - on which the successful functioning of the British polity depended, and that therefore any other religious body was, by its very existence, a potential threat to the Anglican Church's divinely-ordained position in British society. She was certainly not alone in this: Chadwick has commented that "the Anglicans, even in Ireland and Wales where they were minorities, were unwilling to see themselves as a denomination…because their reason for existence was integrated into the political history of the English [sic] people".[lviii] Williams's description of the Church of England as "our National Church" (original capitals) on the title page of *Brief Remarks* and her emphasis on the vital role played by Henry VIII in establishing it in *A History of Wales* show how strongly she felt membership of it to be the default position of all loyal Britons. Membership of non-Anglican denominations, such as the Plymouth Brethren, therefore endangered the central position of the Church of England, as did the failings of the Anglican clergy in Wales who drove Welsh people from the churches to the Methodist

meeting-houses. Barbauld's Unitarianism could not be ignored, and Roman Catholicism was completely beyond the pale.

The importance Williams attached to formal religious affiliation was replicated in her response to the scientific advances of the period which threatened to undermine the literal truth of the Bible; her intellect led her to understand that research in disciplines such as geology could not be ignored but, as with Lyell, a formal declaration that a theory of evolution was a more successful account of the creation of the world than the first chapter of Genesis was beyond her.

On a personal level, this rigidity of attitude presented her with a conceptual difficulty. The central importance of the Church of England in nineteenth-century British society was not only, in Chadwick's words, "because it was recognised by the state but because it was the divinely-authorised truth".[lix] Williams's certainty of its centrality, however, clashed with the unfortunate fact that in spite of herself she felt drawn into a powerful *rapport* with some non-Anglicans: with Barbauld the Unitarian and with Pascal the Roman Catholic.[lx] Her account of the religious beliefs of Henry Williams of Ysgafell takes this disregard for inconvenient facts to a different level. If she had merely wished to convince her readers that he was an Anglican at heart she would have omitted the account of his religious beliefs which demonstrated conclusively that he was not; the fact that she chose to include evidence which made her assertions of his religious allegiance completely preposterous suggest that she had convinced herself that he was essentially an Anglican because that was what she wanted to believe.

The combative and uncompromising nature of Williams's statements in support of the religious truth of Anglicanism and against all other beliefs suggest a deep insecurity in the continuing centrality of the Anglican Church and its doctrines to the society she lived in, and a similarly defensive view of her own personal faith. Her Will, made two years before her

death, offers evidence to support this; it begins with the declaration "I desire to die in the faith hope and love of the Gospel of Christ expecting the resurrection of the body and everlasting life and under a strong sense of duty and responsibility to God the Father Son and Holy Ghost".[lxi] Her religious beliefs at the point of her death would be a matter between her and her God; her apparent need to include them in a document in the public domain suggests that the sense of beleaguered insecurity which had marked so much of her writing about religion remained long after she had finished her last published work.

Notes

i See Jane Williams (1856).

ii See Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë, *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: selected early writings by the Brontës*, ed. by Christine Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

iii Williams (1856), Part II, p. 18.

iv Fraser (1961), p. 101.

v Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England 1734-1984* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1989), pp. 103, 114.

vi Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part I* (1966; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971 edn), pp. 60, 64.

vii Ibid, pp. 7-8.

viii Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England 1714-1780: a political and social study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 204-05.

ix Chadwick, p. 7.

x Ibid, p. 168.

xi Chadwick, p. 303; D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 3-4.

xii T. Harford Battersby, *Two First-Day Sermons Preached in the Church of St John, Keswick* (London, 1855), p. 5; quoted in Orlando Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (London: Allen Lane, 2010; Penguin Books, 2011), p. 163.

xiii See Paul O'Leary, 'When was Anti-Catholicism? The Case of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Wales' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (April 2005), pp. 32-36, on which this section is based.

xiv Dot Jones, p. 425.

xv Williams (1987), pp. 49-50.

xvi Ibid, pp. 106-09.

xvii Williams (1861), pp. 174-79.

xviii Williams (1869), pp. 271-75, 93.

xix Geraint Tudur, ' "Thou Bold Champion, Where art Thou?": Howell Harris and the issue of Welsh identity' in *Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland c.1700-2000,* ed. by Robert Pope (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), p. 45. Howell's conversion and funeral both took place in Talgarth parish church, where Williams worshipped.

xx *The Sun*, Dec. 5, 1849.

xxi In the 'Religious Census' of 1851, 20% of worshippers in Wales attended Anglican churches and 77.3% attended Dissenting places of worship (Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodist); by far the largest of these denominations was the Calvinistic Methodists, whose members, with 25.7% of all church attendances, considerably outnumbered Anglicans (Dot Jones, p. 425).

xxii Tudur, p. 46.

xxiii Roger L. Brown, 'In Pursuit of a Welsh Episcopate' in Pope, p. 87.

xxiv Ibid, p. 88.

xxv *The Sun*, December 26 1849.

xxvi *The Sun*, December 20, 1849.

xxvii *The Daily News*, December 5, 1849.

xxviii *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, II, pp. 1450, 2167-68.

xxix Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. and trans. by Michael A. Faletra (Ontario, Canada; Plymouth, UK; Sydney, Australia: Broadview Press, 2008), pp. 80-82.

xxx J. E. Caerwyn Williams, *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1994), pp. 317-25.

xxxi Williams (1855), pp. 283, 290-91, 64, 65.

xxxii Williams (1861), p. 529.

xxxiii Hylson-Smith, p. 325.

xxxiv Williams (1861), pp. 529, 340.

xxxv Ibid, pp. 281-301.

xxxvi Ibid, p. 343.

xxxvii See Keith Thomson, *Before Darwin: Reconciling God and Nature* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2005) for a detailed account, especially Chapters 1-5 and p. 115. Usher's calculations showed that God finished creating the world on 23 October 4004 B. C. (a Sunday).

xxxviii Chadwick, p. 559.

xxxix Williams (1838), pp. 142, 168-9, 171.

xl Thomson, p. xi.

xli Ibid, p. 223.

xlii Ibid, pp. 530-54.

xliii Williams (1861), p. 4.

xliv Andrew Norman, *Charles Darwin: Destroyer of Myths* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Books, 2013), pp. 57, 73.

xlv Ibid, pp. 106-07.

xlvi Williams (1869), pp. 24, 56.

xlvii Norman, p. 80; Derek J. Blundell and Andrew C. Scott, 'Introduction', in *Lyell: the Past is Key to the Present*, ed. by Derek J. Blundell and Andrew C. Scott (London: The Geological Society, 1998), p. vii.

xlviii Patrick J. Boylan, 'Lyell and the dilemmas of Quaternary glaciation', in Blundell and Scott, p. 156.

xli Leonard G. Wilson, 'Lyell: the man and his times', in Blundell and Scott, p. 33.

l Williams (1869), pp. 24, 56.

li Williams (1861), p. 299.

lii See, for example, *Hanes Bywyd a Marwolaeth y Parch. Fafasour Powel* (n. d.; printed c. 1815), *passim*, which is written with so much urgency and so little punctuation that one sentence takes up almost 24 lines of text (pp. 11-12).

liii Williams (1871), pp. 170-71.

liv Edmund Calamy, *An Account of the Ministers, Lecturers, Masters and fellows of Colleges and Schoolmasters, who were Ejected or Silenced after the Restoration* Vol. II (London: 1713 edn), pp. iii-vii, xv, 712.

lv See Powell's *A Word for God*, esp. pp. 4-6.

lvi 'The Articles of Religion of the Church of England', in *The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921 edn), pp. 571-89.

lvii Williams (1871), p. 169.

lviii Chadwick, p. 571.

lix Chadwick, p. 75.

lx Williams (1855), pp. 248-49.

lxi Will made 24 October 1883; proved 28 March 1885.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

This final chapter will examine the surviving information on Jane Williams's last years relating to her social and financial situation, and her position as a professional woman writer in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century; it will then consider the role which patronage played in her life and writing. It will use the life and career of Anna Jameson, a professional woman writer of the same generation as Williams, whose published work was also concentrated in areas of 'serious non-fiction', to provide a point of comparison. It will then move to an analysis of the ways in which Williams's position in relation to Wales modulated during her writing career, and present an argument for the inclusion of her work in the academic field of Welsh writing in English.

'My narrow income subjects me to many privations'

As has been shown earlier, Williams's life as a professional writer was inevitably affected by her social and financial position. Her explanation of the circumstances which led her to apply for help from the Royal Literary Fund, quoted in the title of this section, demonstrates the financial difficulties which she experienced for almost sixty of her seventy-nine years of life.[i] Until she inherited £100 per annum by the Will of her employer Isabella Hughes, she apparently had little income except what she earned, first from her time with the Morgans at Pipton Cottage and then with Hughes at Aberllunvey House; while Hughes's legacy removed

the need for her to seek further paid employment and gave her a degree of financial independence, its fixed sum was increasingly eroded by inflation and even at its most valuable it was not enough to enable her to mix as an equal with other members of the Llanover circle, as her letters to her aunt describing her stratagems to dress appropriately illustrate (discussed in Chapter 4). Until she was seventy-seven years old, the legacy and whatever she was able to earn by writing constituted her only sources of income and, as she commented - ruefully and at the same time sardonically - in her application for financial help, "the very titles [of her books and articles] plainly indicate that the desire to be useful and not the desire to make money has been my prevalent motive in writing them"; the novelist and critic Geraldine Jewsbury, in her letter supporting Williams's application, made the same point more baldly: "her works *do not sell*" (original emphasis).[ii] Her financial problems were later eased by family legacies, which were entirely responsible for the value of her estate at the time of her death (£990-13-0), since her annuity from Hughes was for life only. Her Will gives a vivid indication of the effect of the constraints caused by lack of an adequate income; she had not been able to pay her maid, Mary Willey, adequately for some years, which meant that Willey had not been able to save for her own old age (she died four months after Williams, and her estate was below the level at which probate was required). Willey, already in her late sixties when Williams made her Will, was therefore faced with the prospect, after Williams's death, of physical drudgery for as long as she could find employment, and the workhouse when she could not. Williams, grateful to Willey for her service over the years (especially with the additional demands imposed by Williams's failing health), left her a small income for life from the investments which she herself had inherited, her Will acknowledging Willey's "underpaid varied disinterested and valuable service". Most of Williams's estate was left to her younger relatives; she had inherited everything she was able to leave from family members, and clearly felt an obligation to pass it on to other

relations. The facts that her entire estate derived from fortuitous legacies, and that until she received them she had not been able to pay Willey well enough even to avoid the possibility of a pauper's burial, shows vividly exactly how precarious her financial position had been for the whole of her writing life.

'Remarkable literary talents… and very slender means': women and literary patronage[iii]

Williams's literary career was made possible because of the legacy from Isabella Hughes and the patronage of Augusta Hall; without the former she would not have had the time or mental energy to engage in the extensive research and frequently lengthy processes of composition required for much of her work, and without the latter it is unlikely that *Artegall*, the biography of Carnhuanawc or the *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr would have been written - and since these were the books which established her literary reputation, her writing career might have lasted no longer than *Miscellaneous Poems* and the two religious tracts of the 1830s. These early books, however, are also the products of patronage in a wider sense. The first thirty years of Williams's writing career, from *Miscellaneous Poems* in 1824 to the *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr in 1857, demonstrate clearly the ways in which patronage modulated from the eighteenth-century pattern to the less overt, more personal methods by which a richer, more powerful individual enabled a poor(er) author to write and publish her work. I therefore wish to consider the forms of patronage received by women writers before and during the period in which Williams was writing, to provide a context for the ways in which it affected her life and work.

Patronage had for generations permitted a male writer without a private income to publish his work but, as Sarah Prescott has pointed out, the most frequent forms of patronage for men in the eighteenth century were barred to women since they could not be private secretaries to

rich aristocratic men, become political journalists or acquire a comfortable living as an Anglican clergymen.[iv] Women writers were not only outside the male literary networks but, as Chapter 6 showed, faced the two-fold prejudice against a woman putting herself into the public arena (especially by publishing under her own name) and offering her books for sale (thus degrading herself by engaging in 'trade'). Since the image of a female author was essentially sexualised in a way that a male writer's was not, the relationship between a woman writer and a male patron would inevitably be suspect; an impecunious woman writer therefore needed a female patron, who would use her influence to support the writer's work and draw the attention of her friends to it (Anna Seward did not need a patron's financial support but regretted being without a patron's influence).[v]

Female patronage could bring its own tensions when the patron and writer were divided by the gulf of social class (as with the middle-class Hannah More and the 'milk-woman' Ann Yearsley) or when the patron appropriated the author's idea for a book (George Ballard took over the project which became his *Memoirs of British Ladies* from the village schoolteacher Elizabeth Elstob).[vi] A female patron who knew her place, however, could be crucial as an enabler; Lady Hertford supported the publication of work by Elizabeth Carter and Elizabeth Singer Rowe as well as by male authors such as James Thomson, John Dyer, Stephen Duck and Richard Savage.[vii]

Sarah Prescott has pointed out that in the early eighteenth century there were three main routes to making money by writing: the sale of copyright to a publisher, finding a rich patron, or publishing by subscription[viii]. It was impossible for a writer to make a living by selling copyrights, and there were more aspiring writers than willing patrons; as a result, gradually subscription became increasingly popular. It provided a method of financing publication in which the cost was divided between many subscribers rather than relying upon the possibly capricious goodwill of an individual aristocrat (although some writers saw little difference;

Eliza Haywood explicitly regarded subscription as another form of patronage).[ix] It was especially useful as a way of enabling women writers to get into print, since it could be done ostensibly without their knowledge by well-wishers impressed by their writing; importantly, this allowed the writer herself to maintain her image as essentially private, modest and unprofessional.[x] This model of the female author, possessing so much feminine modesty that she shrank at the prospect of presenting her work to the public was long established. Katherine Philips in the middle of the seventeenth century claimed that her poems had been stolen and published without her knowledge; Anna Jameson asserted that her novel *The Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826) was not intended for publication and had been sent to press by a male editor; Adelaide Proctor contributed anonymously to Dickens's journal *Household Words* in the 1850s and allowed his staff to present her as poor, working-class and culturally deprived instead of the affluent and cultured middle-class daughter of his friend Barry Cornwell.[xi] Publication by subscription made it unnecessary for the author to back into the limelight in this way, and made it possible to present the work as published with the support of well-wishers whose social position and literary discernment offered convincing testimony of its merits; rather than demonstrating conceit and self-promotion by putting her writing before the public, the author could be seen as responding to popular demand.

Jane Williams and varieties of patronage

As was discussed in Chapter 2, Williams's first book, *Miscellaneous Poems*, was published by subscription and the list is headed by the only titled subscriber, Lady Hereford, thus conforming with the convention that the name of the most socially impressive subscriber - even if not the most generous - should come first. I have found no other record of a connection between Williams and Lady Hereford, who may not have known the poet

personally and merely acceded to a request to give her patronage (in the wider sense of the word) to a deserving young woman whose family had suffered a reverse of fortune. How Lady Hereford was asked to lend her name is a matter for speculation. However, the evidence provided by addresses of several other subscribers suggests that Williams (and presumably her family) may have previously been staying with relatives in the Clifford area of Herefordshire, where Richard Higgins, Williams's uncle by marriage, owned a manor house, several other large houses and substantial parcels of land; the village is approximately three miles north of Hay-on-Wye and is on the banks of the Wye which at this point forms the boundary between Wales and England (and thus is located in another liminal area). In the 1820s and 1830s, a network of middle- and upper-class men - landlords, gentlemen tenants, business associates, friends - in the Clifford-Hay-Glasbury-Talgarth area developed around the new enterprise of the Brecon-Hay railway, as shareholders and members of the board; the chairman of the Railway Board was Lord Hereford. That the contact between Williams and Lady Hereford was made in this way has to remain an intriguing possibility; it does, however, suggest the range and complexity of some of the networks which linked patrons and protégées in that period (as well as the difficulty of identifying such networks nearly two hundred years later).

Williams's next two published works, the religious tracts *Twenty Essays* and *Brief Remarks*, were both published while she was working as a companion to Isabella Hughes. The Appendices argue that Hughes played a key role in their publication, paying the costs of the first tract in order to see her father's essays in print and those of the second as a *quid pro quo* for Williams's work on the first. This was probably the nearest a female model of patronage could come to one of the methods (mentioned earlier) by which male authors received patronage in the eighteenth century, in which the writer became the patron's private secretary - and Hughes's legacy to Williams can also be seen as money from a patron: to give her

protégée the financial independence to continue to write, as well as a personal token of goodwill.

As Chapters 3, 4 and 5 have demonstrated, Williams's next three books were written under the patronage of Augusta Hall, who negotiated with the publisher and paid the costs of printing for the first, used her aristocratic and political contacts to obtain important subscribers for the second, and who seems to have been the prime mover behind the third. The ways in which Hall's patronage operated - both covertly and openly, and at the practical level of publishing arrangements as well as the book's anonymous originator - show both how the traditional system of patronage had become less appropriate in the mid-nineteenth century and how some patrons still found ways to exert literary and social influence in the commercial world of publishing in the 1850s.

Patronage had its literary constraints (in terms of what could be published) and its personal difficulties (if a patron demanded an author's time, attention and subservience), but it protected the writer from the sharp winds of commercial publishing and bookselling. Williams's links with Hall seem to have weakened (although not broken) by the late 1850s. The *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr was written in the two years after Williams's move to London, but her Preface suggests it was not a particularly happy experience and certainly her next book, *The Literary Women of England*, was so different in subject from her books written under Hall's direct patronage that it can be seen as a new, independent, literary direction as well as a bid for financial success. Its commercial failure seems to have driven her back towards her earlier literary territory, aware that her knowledge of Wales and Welsh subjects was the only factor that made her work stand out from other writers in London at that period. Her attempt to write about inclusive British subjects for an inclusive British readership had been a failure in the London-centred publishing market; she may have felt that if her writing was not going to bring her substantial financial rewards she might as well write

about subjects of her own choice which engaged her intellectually and emotionally. As a result, she had only a fixed income which continually decreased in purchasing power, and which brought even greater constraints in the everyday practicalities of life - and which also threatened others' perceptions of her social position. Amanda Vickery has made the point that in the later Georgian period - that is, during Williams's formative years - "Below a certain financial threshold, it was simply not possible to pursue a public life in the polite sense of the word"; Jane Austen, an unmarried middle-class woman with a limited income during the same period, has Emma Woodhouse declare not only that "a lower income confines one to a very limited and generally inferior society" but that "a single woman with a very narrow income must be a ridiculous, disagreeable old maid!"[xii] These were the stereotypes that Williams had grown up with; she would have been well aware of the image she presented to the world she lived in. Her position is thrown into relief by a comparison of her life and writing career with those of another Victorian woman writer who also published extensively in the area of 'serious non-fiction', but who achieved the literary and social prominence which Williams did not, and I wish to consider the example of Anna Jameson's relative success to provide a point of comparison for Williams's relative failure.

Anna Jameson: how to be a successful woman writer in the nineteenth century

Anna Jameson (1794-1864) was of the same generation as Williams, although a few years older. Like Williams, she "struggled for money all her adult life" - indeed, unlike Williams she supported not only herself but her parents and two sisters, which seems to be the reason for her financial difficulties - and, like Williams, she began work in her teenage years.[xiii] At sixteen, Jameson became a governess, and thus held exactly the same sort of socially liminal position as Williams when companion to Hughes. Like Williams, Jameson received £100 per

annum (from "friends and admirers", not a patron) and published creative writing (a novel, as against Williams's poetry) but, also like Williams, was professionally most active in the field of 'serious non-fiction, especially biography and art-history and -criticism.[xiv] Jameson, however, achieved much greater prominence as a writer and literary figure than Williams, both in her lifetime (Judith Johnston records that each new work of Jameson "was well received by contemporary critics and the reading public") and afterwards; many of her books remained in print until the twentieth century and her name was still sufficiently well known in the 1920s for Virginia Woolf to refer to her by surname alone in a list of Victorian writers in *Orlando*.[xv] While Jameson's and Williams's personal and literary lives were alike in many respects there are also significant differences, and it is these which contributed to Jameson's literary and social success in London in contrast to Williams's failure.

Firstly, Jameson was extremely well connected socially.[xvi] As a governess she worked for rich - and in one case, titled - families; through these contacts she and her father, an artist, were invited to accompany another rich titled man and his daughter on tours of Italy and Germany, with Jameson acting as companion and chaperone to the daughter. She used the knowledge of art she acquired on these travels as the basis for her early publications, and became part of influential literary circles which included Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, Thomas and Jane Carlyle, George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell (who asked for, and gratefully received, her advice on the ending of *North and South*). With these influential contacts, and this degree of literary respect, Jameson's writings attracted the sort of attention that ensured substantial sales and opportunities for more literary work. Williams had no such connections; when she needed literary testimonials to support her application to the Royal Literary Fund, the three who wrote letters of support were Augusta Hall (who had social but not literary respect), Geraldine Jewsbury and Anna Maria Hall, both regarded as second-rank writers. Since this was a situation when Williams would have chosen

the most impressive referees possible, it indicates clearly the limitations of her position in the London literary world.

Secondly, Jameson married, and thus acquired a social status which Williams lacked. Even though Jameson's marriage did not last long in real terms (after four years her husband emigrated first to Dominica and then to Canada while she stayed in Europe) her influential contacts seem to have protected her reputation; as Judith Johnston points out, Jameson's married status gave her "a particular licence to travel independently and to move freely in society in ways that an unmarried woman could not".[xvii] Both her every-day and literary lives were smoother as Mrs Jameson than they would have been as Miss Murphy, and as they were for Miss Jane Williams.

Thirdly, whereas the topics and approach of Williams's works are relatively weighty, intellectual and academic, many of Jameson's published writings made greater concessions to a wider reading public who wished to know something about the subjects but not necessarily to subject them to deep analysis; the titles of some of her books - *Beauties of the Court of King Charles the Second, The Decorations of the Garden-Pavilion in the Grounds of Buckingham Palace* - reveal as much about their scope and saleability as do the titles of Williams's books'

The most significant difference between the two writers, however, lies in a major strand of Jameson's published work: her focus on Italian art, in essays on Giotto, Raphael, Filippo Lippi, Leonardo da Vinci and Titian. Judith Johnston argues that this writing exploited and developed the Victorian interest in Renaissance Italian art, which came to be seen as part of "the promotion of education and the spread of aesthetic 'culture' to the under-educated working classes".[xviii] A familiarity with (at least reproductions of) paintings by the Italian 'Masters' became an indication of culture in the middle class and of aspirations towards

culture by the working class; Jameson's writing on art history and criticism became necessary reading. The subjects of Williams's writing, by contrast, were far from literary fashion; the English reading public had never regarded an interest in, and knowledge of, Welsh history, biography and education as proof of a cultivated mind and sensibility. Williams's response to Wales and Welsh literature, history, language and culture - the subjects which determined the course of her writing life - was exactly the element which ensured that in Britain as a whole her work would always be a minority interest within writing in the English language, and means that her work can only be adequately analysed within the field of Welsh writing in English.

Williams's writing career: a trajectory of Welshness

Chapter 1 of this thesis argued a case for the inclusion of Williams's writing within the academic field of Welsh Writing in English on the triple grounds of its content, its genres and the way in which it operates in the 'inbetween' spaces produced by the articulation of cultural differences (identified by Bhabha) in the context of the mutual permeability of the two languages and literary cultures of Wales (explored by M. Wynn Thomas). Chapters 2-8 provided analyses of each of Williams's books in chronological order of publication, while Chapter 9 examined her religious beliefs and the way that they informed her writing from her first book to her last article. I wish now to consider her writing career as a whole, and to use the analyses of her books in earlier chapters to plot the trajectory of her changing relation to Wales throughout her writing life.

In an appropriately Celtic formulation, Williams's nine books can be divided into three groups of three; the first chronological group (*Miscellaneous Poems* and the two religious tracts, *Twenty Essays* and *Brief Remarks*) can be characterised as the 'English' group. This is

immediately clear in the two tracts; they make no reference to Wales, Welsh people or to any aspect of Welsh life or culture. The categorisation of *Miscellaneous Poems* is superficially less obvious, since three of its twenty poems use Welsh references: 'Gwernyfed Hall' and 'Lines on the banks of the Llunvey' both use Welsh places and 'A Welsh Bard's Lamentation' uses an event of Welsh history. However, as Chapter 2 demonstrated, the 'Welshness' of the two poems of place lies in their titles alone, and all three use their titular subjects as a medium through which Williams could articulate emotions which she could not express directly; through their Welshness she was able to create a space to confront deep fears and insecurities which had no direct outlet. Gramich and Brennan have observed that Hemans used Wales "as a poetic resource"; in these early poems, Williams does the same thing.[xix] At this point she was aware of Wales and its history in terms of its difference from the England she had grown up in but, as her use of it in these poems shows, she did not yet feel that she was part of it.

The second group of three books (*Artegall*, the biography of Carnhuanawc and the *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr) show a Williams who had learned much more about Welsh life and culture, and who was in the process of constructing a Welsh-related identity for herself. The three books approach Welshness from different perspectives and, while they show her becoming more deeply embedded in Welshness, each also, in its own way, demonstrates the position of 'both/and' which Dawson and Johnson have posited and which was discussed in Chapter 1. Williams's aim in writing *Artegall* was to rebut the Commissioners' slurs in the Blue Books of 1847 in the eyes of English opinion-formers by demonstrating her greater and more detailed knowledge of the Welsh people, and to present a 'scientific', sociological - even anthropological - account of Welsh culture, language, literature and history which would persuade her readers that the Blue Books' judgements were essentially unfair; as Chapter 3 demonstrated, her emotional involvement with her

subject, and her knowledge and understanding of the reality of Welsh people's lives as well as the way in which Welsh society worked, led her further and further away from the objective, measured account she had planned, and had started, to write. The text of *Artegall* shows Williams gradually moving towards a degree of identification with the Welsh people whose culture, religion, language and morals she was defending, while simultaneously remaining aware of her position as their interpreter to her English readership.

Her biography of Carnhuanawc and the *Autobiography* of Cadwaladyr both demonstrate a still deeper drilling-down into bedrock elements of Welshness. In the former she was writing an English-language biography of an important Welsh cultural and public figure which used the structure of a distinctively Welsh literary form, the *cofiant,* in a book written for a dual readership: on one hand, English literati with a scholarly interest in medieval Welsh and Celtic literature and history, and on the other hand members of the *gwerin* who saw Carnhuanawc as a much-loved patriotic champion of Welsh language and culture. The *Autobiography* of Cadwaladyr presents a further degree of 'both/and', an identification with Welshness taken to a deeper level but surrounded by an English-orientated critical apparatus.

In the narrative Williams ventriloquises a Welsh-speaking woman whose origins, cultural background and first language were on the other side of the Welsh-English divide from her own. In the Preface, Introduction and Appendices Williams uses the persona of an educated and scholarly member of the English middle class; in the narrative she writes equally convincingly in the thoroughly Welsh working-class persona she has created for Cadwaladyr. In another level of complexity, each chapter of the (Welsh-persona) narrative contains an epigraph from the English literary canon and footnotes in which the (English-persona) editor explains, expands or contradicts statements in the (Welsh-persona) narrative. Readers may choose to avoid the Preface, Introduction and Appendices; they cannot so easily avoid the presence of the epigraphs at the top of the page nor the footnotes at the bottom.

Bhabha has analysed "the liminal and ambivalent boundaries that articulate the signs of national culture as zones of control or abandonment, of…independence and of … dependence".[xx] The *Autobiography* provides a vivid example of a text which works within the liminal and ambivalent boundaries - literary, psychological and class - between English and Welsh culture; it dramatizes the relationship which Bhabha characterised as the hybridity of identity, "split between the two sides of the colonial divide".[xxi] Williams operates through two literary personae: as the book's 'editor' she writes as a representative of the hegemonic English literary culture, while as the first-person narrator of Cadwaladyr's life she writes as the representative of Welsh difference from that culture. Bakhtin's comment that all the elements of style of a literary work "are permeated with the author's evaluative attitude towards content and express his social position" reflects the complexity of Williams's task, since she had limited control over the content of the narrative and occupied a very different social position from the persona at the centre of the book.[xxii] Her use of the impersonal form in her comment in the book's Preface on its style of narration -"it was impossible in all parts [of the narrative] to give the exact words spoken" and that "whenever the very words [of Cadwaladyr] were apt and striking, they were retained" exploits her command of the formal register of English to airbrush the extent to which she had imposed her own editorial persona on the raw material from Cadwaladyr, but the result is a seamless narrative in which she creates a convincing Welsh persona for her subject.[xxiii] The multiplicity of the levels of Welshness and Englishness in the *Autobiography* offer a vivid illustration of the way she works between, on and around Bhabha's "liminal and ambivalent boundaries".

If *Miscellaneous Poems* and the two religious tracts form the group of 'English' books, *Artegall*, the biography of Carnhuanawc and the *Autobiography* of Cadwaladyr constitute her 'Welsh' group. Significantly, all of them depend on her personal engagement with real living Welsh people, whether in social and cultural groupings (as in *Artegall*), a man she had known

personally and whose life and work she recollected in tranquillity after his death with the help of his personal papers (Carnhuanawc), or a strong-minded woman who was very much alive and insisted that her rights as the owner of her own life should be respected (Cadwaladyr). Williams's last three books (*The Literary Women of England*, *Celtic Fables* and *A History of Wales*) can be best categorised as her 'London' group, not only because she was living in London when she wrote them but because, when set beside the 'Welsh' group, their relation to Wales is marked by distance. *The Literary Women of England* includes details of some writers' Welsh connections but its focus is elsewhere, as its title makes clear; *Celtic Fables* and *A History of Wales* use Welsh sources, but these are to be found in antiquarian documents (like those for *The Literary Women of England*) rather than in the engagement with living Welsh people which characterises the second group. In this third group, therefore, Williams was working within the antiquarian tradition of writing in English about Wales which had become popular again in the middle of the nineteenth century, reflected in works such as Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogion* in the 1840s and Matthew Arnold's lectures on the importance to English Philistines of studying medieval Celtic literature (in translation) in the 1860s; it was an approach which celebrated the richness of the Welsh literature and language of six centuries earlier (as reimagined for the modern Victorian age) while being completely compatible with indifference at best, or scorn at worst, towards flesh-and-blood Welsh people of the nineteenth century. This is not to suggest that Williams was in any way indifferent or scornful towards the Welsh people: it is rather to point out how the sources she chose and the approach she adopted in these books meshed with the view of Wales adopted by English antiquarians and literati who lacked her knowledge and understanding of nineteenth-century Welsh society and culture. It would have been possible for Williams to write all the books in the third group if she had never been to Wales; all she required was access to a library which contained the necessary documents.

This classification of her nine books is based on their relation to Wales rather than where they were written; the 'English' group was written in Wales (except some *Miscellaneous Poems* which internal evidence places before she moved to Glasbury) and one of the 'Welsh' group (Cadwaladyr's *Autobiography*) was written in London. The categories above are therefore based on her books' affective relation to Welsh identity rather than the location of their composition, and taken in sequence they show clearly the trajectory of the way in which she positioned herself in relation to Wales. If this trajectory were to be plotted on a graph, it would show a line which moved from a low starting-point (her use of Welsh places and history for her own literary and emotional purposes in *Miscellaneous Poems*) to a higher point (her emotional engagement with Welsh people in the later chapters of *Artegall*), a second higher point (the embedding in Welsh culture by which she used a distinctive Welsh literary form in the biography of Carnhuanawc) and a further even higher point to represent her first-person narrative of a Welsh-speaking Welsh woman in Cadwaladyr's *Autobiography*. It would then descend to a point only fractionally above the baseline for *The Literary Women of England*, rise again (although not so high) for *Celtic Fables* and stay at the same level to represent *A History of Wales*. This would provide a clear, see-at-a-glance visual image of the trajectory; however, it would drastically oversimplify not only the complexity of her position in each of her books but the nature of the route between each one and the next.

The complexity and instability of Williams's position in each of her books is perhaps better illustrated by a different image: that of the needle of a compass, which not only moves to realign the direction in which it is pointing depending on its user's position and direction of gaze, but also wavers and oscillates even when its user is in a fixed position. It would also be simplistic to assume that her movement between one position and the next was smooth and direct. Even if the diaries, "letters and written papers of every kind" which she mentioned in her Will survived and gave the fullest account of which she was capable, the precise, detailed

modulations of her position would remain unacknowledged and unrecorded, because unconscious. Her self-identification to the trustees of the Royal Literary Fund as "Welsh by descent and long residence" is valuable not only as a rare conscious and deliberate expression of her position in relation to Wales but because it has the purity of irrelevance: the only person interested in whether she regarded herself as Welsh and on what grounds was Williams herself. It is therefore valuable as a briefly-opened window on to what she told herself about her personal identity at the moment she filled in the form; it says nothing about how she had arrived at that point.

Certainly, as she got further away in time from living in Wales there are increasing signs of insecurity in relation to her Welsh identity, and it is possible that her self-description to the Royal Literary Fund may have been a process of shoring up fragments against the ruins. It has already been remarked that her 'London' books rely entirely on documentary sources which derived, in whole or in part, from the Wales of earlier periods, in contrast to the engagement with flesh-and-blood Welsh people in the 'here and now' of her 'Welsh' group; it is also possible to see this focus on antiquarian documents as a celebration of a lost Welsh world - lost by the passing of time and acting as a surrogate for her own personal lost Welsh world. Chapter 9 drew attention to the importance of her religious beliefs and the way these appear - and sometimes obtrude - in her writing throughout her long literary career. Religion not only played an important part in the creation of her mind-set but was the only constant throughout her life. She moved from southern England to Breconshire to London, from town to country and back again; she moved from one social class to another, as the daughter of an affluent middle-class family to an employee in the household of others and then back to a (much less affluent) middle-class existence; she changed from an English girl with Welsh connections to a member of an influential Welsh social and cultural circle which was deeply engaged in Welsh patriotic activity, and from there to a middle-aged woman writer in

London whose contact with Wales gradually dwindled and faded. From this standpoint, the Anglican faith and observances in which she had been brought up provided an emotional as well as a religious continuity in the multiplicity of changes to which the rest of her life was subject.

Religion as a part of Williams's Welsh identity

Religion plays a major part in Williams's last three pieces of published prose. In *A History of Wales*, as Chapter 8 demonstrated, her religious prejudices led her to distort the accepted line of Welsh history; in 'Some Particulars of the Parish of Glasbury' she copied *verbatim* documents connected with the history of the parish she had lived in, and whose church she had attended, more than a quarter of a century before; and in 'Henry Williams of Ysgafell' she allowed emotion to override intellect in her determination to establish an identification between herself and her seventeenth-century ancestor on the basis of a shared religious faith. Henry Williams of Ysgafell was also vital to her in terms of her position in relation to Wales, since he was the source of the "Welsh descent" she had claimed to the Royal Literary Fund. In the first paragraph of *A History of Wales* Williams had taken an anthropologist's view of the stories nations told themselves about their origins and the founding myths they created for themselves - which often defied scientific fact - but in when she accepted the stories which had aggregated around the name and memory of her ancestor - stories which ranged from the improbable to the scientifically impossible - she showed exactly the same need to "tenaciously and vividly retain… the oral traditions, stories and ballads" of her own family's history.[xxiv] The extent to which she departed from the scholarly habits of a lifetime demonstrates how vital her family's 'founding myth' was to her, and it was expressed in her writing in terms of religious beliefs and affiliation which connected her to Wales.

Williams's Welsh literary patriotism

In a discussion of poetry in Wales in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sarah Prescott has argued that during that period "Wales became a subject for poetry through a re-evaluation of the nation itself as worthy of poetic treatment", and the late eighteenth-century Celtic Revival built on the foundation of this re-evaluation.[xxv] This positive view was essentially literary and cultural, however, and during Williams's writing life English attitudes - which the Welsh have historically been unable to ignore completely - moved sharply towards the negative, with a consequent defensiveness and insecurity in many Welsh writers. While the literary image of Wales could still offer a suitable backdrop for Romantic writing this could all too easily modulate into the darkly Gothic, and in any case the flesh-and-blood inhabitants - of a lower social class than most English writers and visitors - were considered unworthy of the 'sublime' landscapes that surrounded them.[xxvi] The Englishman Thomas Love Peacock, who lived in Wales, married a Welsh woman and learned some Welsh, praised Welsh scenery while expressing only contempt for the "backward and superstitious people" who lived in it.[xxvii] This cultural and class contempt from individual English observers was strengthened and given an official status by the 1847 Blue Books on Education in Wales, and Gramich and Brennan have argued that "the impact on cultural life [in Wales] effected by the 1847 Blue Books…further problematized" the act of writing for the Welsh woman author.[xxviii]

The first of Williams's 'Welsh' books, *Artegall*, was one of the most combative contemporary responses to the Blue Books, and its explicit aim, to defend the Welsh people from the Commissioners' inaccuracies and slurs, made the book very obviously a patriotic endeavour. Although Williams was its sole author, she had the enthusiastic support of Augusta Hall (who wrote to the publisher "it will be fresh capital for the national cause") and the other members

of the Llanover circle.[xxix] The warm support and admiration which *Artegall* received gave Williams the confidence for further patriotic literary projects.

Certainly her biography of Carnhuanawc can be seen as an assertion of the importance of the Welsh language and Welsh culture, as Chapter 4 demonstrated, and the act of writing it, and its confidence in the future of the language and culture, can be seen as a patriotic service. Her biography showed Carnhuanawc devoting his life, knowledge and talents to the service of his country, even to the point of exhaustion; her work on the book, which memorialised the life and achievements of one of the greatest contemporary Welsh cultural patriots, and was completed while "working constantly against the drawback of ill-health, and latterly under a weight of suffering", as her Preface says, can be seen in the same light.[xxx] Her *History of Wales* can also be seen as a patriotic exercise; as Chapter 8 pointed out, there had not been an academic one-volume history of Wales in English for nearly three hundred years, and Williams was equipped to write one in a way that English outsiders were not. These three books - *Artegall*, the biography of Carnhuanawc, and *A History of Wales* - were part of a patriotic endeavour in which her liminal status was an advantage, and her knowledge of both Welsh and English sources and readerships could be used to assert that Wales had its own identity in the same way as any other nation, and to make this declaration to English as well as to Welsh readers.

Celtic Fables is particularly revealing because its poems seem to have been written, and the book published, for Williams's own interest as a literary exercise and to amuse and entertain herself and perhaps her friends; in comparison with some of her other books, it carries no sense of the weight of patriotic responsibility. Indeed, her nine books present the rationale for a division into another three groups of three, on the basis of the attitude they demonstrate to the patriotic task of serving Wales. By this classification, there are three 'English' books, which reflect little or no relation to Wales (the two religious tracts and *The Literary Women*

of England), three books which reveal a strong sense of patriotic engagement, arising either from Hall's influence or from Williams's own sense of moral obligation (the biography of Carnhuanawc, the *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr, and *A History of Wales*), and three books in at least some parts of which she was able to use her relationship to Wales to express her own feelings, set out her Welsh credentials, and gain pleasure - or at least some satisfaction - by doing so: *Miscellaneous Poems* (because of the three 'Welsh' poems), *Artegall*, and *Celtic Fables*.

The fact that the members of these three categories are intermingled in terms of the chronology of their composition (in contrast to the linearity of the earlier classification) illustrates one dimension of the way in which Williams's relation to Wales remained fluid, constantly changing, and oscillating not only from one point to another on the trajectory of her work as a whole but around and across a single point; and between these separate positions and the oscillations around them there are unknowable gaps. Pierre Macherey has argued that what is important about a work is what it does not say, and that the meaning of a text lies in the *relation* between the explicit and the implicit, not on one side of the fence or the other (Ce qui est important dans une oeuvre, c'est qu'elle ne dite pas…le sens est dans la *relation* de l'explicite â l'implicite, et non d'un côté ou de l'autre de la barrière).[xxxi] Williams's books, considered both as a body of work and as individual pieces of writing, give much information and reveal much about their author, but they also present a multiplicity of these unfillable gaps. Her position in relation to Wales must be considered as residing in the liminal space that is located between the explicit and the implicit, and therefore neither on one side of the fence or the other.

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, a case was made for the inclusion of Williams's work within the academic field of Welsh Writing in English, and I wish now to return specifically to this point in the light of the analysis of her individual pieces of writing presented in the previous chapters. In the first chapter I advanced the argument for the inclusion of her work on three grounds: of content, of multiplicity of genres and, in an application of Bhabha's formulation, of the ways her work operates in the 'inbetween' spaces produced by the articulation of the differences and boundaries between the Welsh and English languages and cultures so as to reflect the permeability of those boundaries, and the position she claimed for herself of being able to see behind the 'mask' presented by both communities to the outside world (in Anthony P. Cohen's image).

On one level, the claims for her work to be included in the field of Welsh Writing in English on grounds of content can be easily justified by the account of the subject-matter of her writing and the depth and detail of the knowledge of Welsh literature, history, language and cultural practices which it displays. These claims are extended further by the contention - sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit - in her work that female experience is as valid a subject for authorial attention as male experience. This is explicit in the image of the promontory and the cave she employed in the Introduction to the *Literary Women of England* (discussed in Chapter 6) on the relative positions of women and men in the society she lived in and (with a satirical edge) in the poem 'The Ancients of the World' from *Celtic Fables* (discussed in Chapter 7). The fact that the experiences of a woman - and, indeed, a working-class woman - are considered sufficiently interesting to form the basis of another of her books (Cadwaladyr's *Autobiography*, discussed in Chapter 5) gives further evidence of the importance of this strand in Williams's work, regardless of the circumstances in which it might have been written. A significant element in her writings is the extent to which they

present women as having (and having had) the right to an independent intellectual, literary and cultural existence, which contrasts with that of many contemporary writers - Hemans, perhaps, foremost among them - who regarded the 'normal', unmarked position for a woman in these areas of her life as dependent on men in the same way that the 'normal' unmarked social position for a woman was as a member of a family unit headed by a man. As Chapter 6 showed, Williams was well aware of the strong societal pressures which normalised women's position in all areas of their life outside the domestic and maternal as essentially relative; her writing makes it clear that she regarded an independent intellectual life for women as both a right and a necessity.

The second ground on which I wish to argue for the inclusion of Williams's work in the field of Welsh Writing in English is that the range and multiplicity of genres in which she wrote will expand the parameters of the field, especially in relation to women's writing. The earlier chapters of this thesis have shown the range of genres in which she worked in terms of their formal classification: poetry, biography, history, literary criticism, tracts and letters on religion, a critique of an official report to the government on education in Wales, and a memoir of childhood. As with the first ground of my argument for her work's inclusion in the field, any discussion of her writing in relation to genre has to be extended further than a mere list; her choice and handling of genre also blurs the boundaries and operates in the 'inbetween' spaces thus created. Her biography of Carnhuanawc, which overlays an English surface structure on a Welsh deep structure, is a particularly clear example of M. Wynn Thomas's comment, quoted in Chapter 1, that while each of the two literary and linguistic cultures of Wales is and always has been aware of the other, the boundaries between them have always been highly permeable; the *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr shows the way in which Williams's writing can blur formal boundaries to a point where the book cannot be satisfactorily assigned to any single genre. More generally, Williams's practice of writing on

specifically Welsh non-fiction subjects while using titles and epigraphs from the English literary canon - sometimes for the book as a whole (*Artegall*) and sometimes for every chapter (the biography of Carnhuanawc, the *Autobiography* of Betsy Cadwaladyr, and *A History of Wales*) presents another example of the intermeshing and blurring of boundaries between the two literary cultures of Wales which M. Wynn Thomas posits as a characteristic of Welsh Writing in English.

While these two grounds make compelling arguments for the inclusion of Williams's work in the field of Welsh Writing in English, the third ground set out above provides incontrovertible justification for its inclusion in the field. As Chapter 1 showed, the recent analysis of Welsh Writing in English has led to the understanding that the 'inbetween' spaces produced by the articulation of differences between the two literary and linguistic cultures of Wales, and their interlocking multiplicity, form an important element in the construction of Welsh literary identity. As this examination of Williams's life and work has shown in the discussion of her individual works and the analysis of the trajectory of Welshness observable in her writing career, the most salient and constant feature of her writing is that it operates in exactly these 'inbetween' spaces in a way which simultaneously reflects, exemplifies and exploits the permeability of the boundaries between the two literary cultures; this enabled her to create a position in which she could claim to see behind the 'mask' of both those cultures and their communities, in Anthony P. Cohen's image. It is this element which allows her disparate work in a variety of genres to be considered as forming a cohesive whole; at the same time, it is this element which requires the individual positions of each of her books to be plotted in terms of their oscillations around the properties of their formal genres and around how she positioned herself in relation to Wales.

In every aspect of her life - ancestral, geographical, social, financial, class, linguistic and literary - it is true to say, as in the epigram quoted in Chapter 1, that Offa's dyke was within

her, as this thesis has shown. Her liminality is an essential characteristic of her work and her literary personality, as it is and has been for Welsh writing in English as a whole; the question to be addressed is therefore not whether her work is part of Welsh writing in English, but how it can be included within the critical analysis of Welsh Writing in English. As Chapter I argued, the establishment of new and inclusive parameters which would permit Williams's writing to take its place within the academic field of Welsh Writing in English is long overdue. As has been demonstrated, her work is already part of Welsh writing in English; it must now become a part of Welsh Writing in English.

This thesis began by quoting John Ormond's poem on a blackbird which sang to "define his territory" and "mark his boundaries". Williams's 'singing' defines her territory and marks her boundaries by exactly the characteristic feature of Welsh Writing in English: of establishing an authorial voice which is aware of existing boundaries and maps out an area on, around and between them, and does this with a variety, fluidity and essential instability which reflects her varied, complex and nuanced personal history as well as her varied and changing intellectual and literary interests. Williams was able to use the liminality of her position and literary materials to forge for herself a distinctive authorial personality, and to meld and modulate the variety of genres in which she worked, and the oscillations of her changing position in relation to Wales during her writing career, into a strong individual literary voice. Her 'songs' are polyphonous, boundary-breaking and constantly varied, but she found a way to sing them "through the one voice she happened to have".

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Notes

i RLF MS, p. 2.

ii Ibid, pp. 5, 6.

iii Ibid, p. 6.

iv Sarah Prescott (2003), p. 116.

v Norma Clarke, *The Rise and Fall of the Woman of Letters* (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 27.

vi Clarke, pp. 8-9, 59.

vii Jack, p. 208; Sarah Prescott (2003), pp. 181, 177.

viii Ibid, p. 103.

ix Ibid, p. 128.

x Ibid, p. 127.

xi Clarke, p. 158; Dorothy Mermin, *Godiva's Ride: Women of Letters in England, 1830-1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. xiii, 76.

xii Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: women's lives in Georgian England* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 265; Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by Ronald Blythe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, repr. 1972), pp. 109-10.

xiii Judith Johnston, *Anna Jameson: Victorian, Feminist, Woman of Letters* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), p. 2.

xiv Ibid, p. 6.

xv Ibid, pp. 9, 1.

xvi Ibid, esp. Chapter 1.

xvii Ibid, pp. 2-3.

xviii Ibid, p. 154.

xix Gramich and Brennan, p. xxxii.

xx Bhabha (1990), p. 300.

xxi Bhabha (1986, p. 173.

xxii Bakhtin, p. 170.

xxiii Jane Williams (1857), pp. 19, 23.

xxiv Jane Williams (1869), p. 1.

xxv Sarah Prescott (2012), p. 147.

xxvi See Aaron (2010) and (2013), *passim*.

xxvii Carl Dawson, *His fine wit: a study of Thomas Love Peacock* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 240.

xxviii Gramich and Brennan, p. xxxi.

xix Tonn MSS 3. 109A.

xxx Jane Williams (1855), p. xii.

xxx Pierre Macherey, *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire* (Paris: François Masparo, 1980), p. 107.

APPENDIX I

My contention that Essays I-VI were not composed by Jane Williams derives from a comparison of their content and style with her other prose writings; the differences between them are far greater than can be explained by her development as a prose writer over many years. In their content and approach Essays VII-X belong with Essays I-VI, but their sentence structure resembles the shorter, less structurally-complex sentence patterns of Essays XII-XX and Williams's other prose writing from the same period (*Brief Remarks* and *Artegall*). The most likely explanation for this is that in Essays VII-X Williams was writing up the published version from notes prepared by someone else - probably the writer of Essays I-VI, since these two groups of essays share the same treatment of the topics they discuss. My main concern here is to argue that, whatever her role in the production of Essays VII-XI, Williams's claims of authorship can be fully accepted only in relation to Essays XII-XX.

Style

The difference in style between the two groups of essays is made clearest by setting two typical examples from the first six essays next to two from the last nine.

> This noble faculty [Reason], this very spirit and self of man, being tutored in some degree to its natural place and priority, and meekly subjected to the Law of God, he finds in the study of Scripture with prayer, its noblest use, while holding high and holy communion with Emmanuel, he receives fresh supplies of present grace, new pledges of future glory.
>
> (Essay II, 'On Self-Knowledge' Part I, p. 17)

> None can know of another's heart what he knows of his own; those sacred conceptions of evil which have lurked within or produced open sin, those instances of resistance to the wakening voice of Providence, and to the Holy Spirit's influences, those multiplied mercies which make

ingratitude in his case so black a crime, and that peculiar sense of God's loving-kindness, and of personal obligation, which render him an offender against knowledge, his desertion of feelings and faculties which he had consecrated to the service of his Lord, these things, but with a power unutterable by human tongue, teach the true penitent's heart, when returning he renews his application to the Saviour's blood, that his offences are more heinous than those of other men, that he is indeed the chief of sinners.

(Essay III, 'On Self-Improvement' Part II, p. 20)

Speech is a medium of communicating our wants and wishes, of relating what has happened to us, of expressing our pains and pleasures, and of asking for sympathy. It commands, entreats, consoles and delights us. It instructs in matters of fact and of experience, in worldly, intellectual and spiritual knowledge. It tells of courtesy, and kindness, and affection, and conduces to the happiness of social life.

(Essay XII, 'On Conversation', p. 101)

But it is profitable as well as pleasant to see what construction enlightened, active and studious minds have put upon certain passages [of books], the manner in which they have been affected by them, and the practical improvement they have derived from them. Thus by the natural sympathy of human heart, the reader is often led through the seriousness or devotion of an author's style to experience corresponding feelings.

(Essay XV, 'On Books', p. 135)

The third and fourth extracts use structurally simple sentences, so that the way in which the subordinate clauses relate to the main clause, and therefore the sentence's meaning, is immediately clear; by contrast, the first two extracts lack the clear syntactic 'signposts' which enable a reader to navigate them. These differences make it very unlikely that they were written by the same person.

Content and approach

One of the most notable features of Essays I-VI is their dogmatic tone and an approach which suggests that their writer saw no need to provide reasoned arguments; there is also frequent use of rhetorical questions and exclamations (especially "oh!", "alas!" and "nay!"), which

suggest an author who has transferred the rhetorical devices familiar from preaching to the written word. Essays XII-XX, by contrast, eschew such rhetorical devices and demonstrate an understanding of the need to construct an argument to lead readers to accept the essay's conclusion - the same technique as used in *Brief Remarks* and *Artegall*.

Further, the two groups of essays have mutually incompatible elements; Essays I-VI demonstrate social and intellectual snobbery ("The multitude have low notions and …perverted ambition"), while Essay XII, by contrast, declares "Everyone knows something: most people know many things better than ourselves".[i] Essays I-VI are remarkably humourless, while Essay XV remarks sardonically that the number of books published strikes "everyone with surprise and some people, who love them not, with alarm" and Essay XVIII comments that bores "try their hearers' patience with tedious traditional histories and oracular judgements, while exciting pity for the folly of which these things are outward demonstrations".[ii] It is also difficult to believe that Williams was the author of the slighting remarks on women's intellectual abilities and interests in Essay II.

Analysis of style, content and approach therefore lead me to conclude that Williams was responsible for Essays XII-XX only.

Notes

i [Jane Williams], 1839, pp. 45, 105.

ii Ibid, p. 160.

APPENDIX II

While there is no hard evidence on which to attribute to a specific author those of the *Twenty Essays* not written by Jane Williams, it is possible to construct a scenario to explain the composition of the *Essays* and the publication of both tracts. A significant factor, as always, lies in the practicalities of their publication; *Twenty Essays* was published in London in 1838 (by R. B. Seeley and H. Burnside), *Brief Remarks* in Hereford in 1839 (by T. T. Davies). It is highly unlikely that either publisher would have regarded an undistinguished religious tract by an anonymous author as a commercial proposition but, since they were published anonymously - to say nothing of their unfashionable content - attempting to publish them by subscription like Williams's *Miscellaneous Poems* was unlikely to be successful. Neither Williams herself, at that time employed as a companion by Isabella Hughes of Glasbury, nor her family would have been in a position to pay for publication.

However, Isabella Hughes would have been able to meet the costs of publishing both tracts without noticing the expense. She was the youngest daughter of the Rev. John Hughes, curate of Glasbury from 1795 to 1805, and ran her widowed father's household until his death. She inherited most of her father's extensive estates as well as his large holding of government stock, and also his library and papers (as her Will makes clear); this included his collection of antiquarian documents.[i] A quarter-century after Isabella Hughes's death Williams published an article which used seventeenth-century documents on the ecclesiastical history of Glasbury, copied *verbatim* from the Rev John Hughes's papers.[ii]

The course of events which I wish to suggest is as follows: John Hughes planned *Twenty Essays*, chose the subjects for each one, wrote the first six and developed notes for the seventh to the eleventh but only chose the titles and perhaps drafted brief indications of the

contents of the remaining nine before his death. His daughter Isabella inherited these drafts and notes and wanted to give the world the benefit of his religious and moral guidance, but was aware that his six completed essays were not enough to form a publishable book; in addition, publishing only six would have destroyed his design. Years after his death, Isabella Hughes had as her companion a published author who was deeply interested in religious subjects and who was a devout Anglican (and therefore doctrinally sound to the daughter of an Anglican clergyman); for Isabella Hughes, it was likely to be her best opportunity to see her father's work in print. Subsequently, I suggest, an arrangement was reached by which Williams wrote the remaining essays which John Hughes had planned, and Isabella Hughes paid for the tract's publication.

This scenario is supported by the fact that Williams's *Brief Remarks*, although published in 1839, is a response to a tract which had appeared in 1831. Rebuttals of tracts and pamphlets were usually published soon after the work to which they responded; certainly it would have been very unusual for Williams's *Brief Remarks* to have been written much later than a few months after the publication of Lambert's pamphlet. By the time *Brief Remarks* was published it was very unlikely that any potential reader would remember what it was responding to. Long before Williams's tract was published, its subject was irrelevant.

The date of its publication does, however, fit with Williams's suggested role in the writing of *Twenty Essays*. The publication of *Brief Remarks* could therefore have been a *quid pro quo* from Isabella Hughes for Williams's work on her father's essays. Its publication so long after Lambert's pamphlet - without which Williams's was in serious danger of being meaningless - certainly suggests that unusual factors were at work.

Notes

i PCC Wills PROB 11/1497: Will made 18 Feb. 1896, codicil added 12 Nov. 1808, Will proved 9 April 1809; PCC Wills, PROB 11/2021: Will made 9 Dec. 1842, codicils added June 1844 and 10 April 1845, Will proved 5 July 1845.

iii Jane Williams, 'Some Particulars concerning the Parish of Glasbury', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. I (4th series) (1870), pp. 306-323; "a manuscript, endorsed in the handwriting of the Rev John Hughes and found among his papers" is given as the source for much of the information in the article (p, 313).

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES 1-3 ARE USED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES.

FIGURE 4 IS USED WITH THE PERMISSION OF HONNO PRESS.

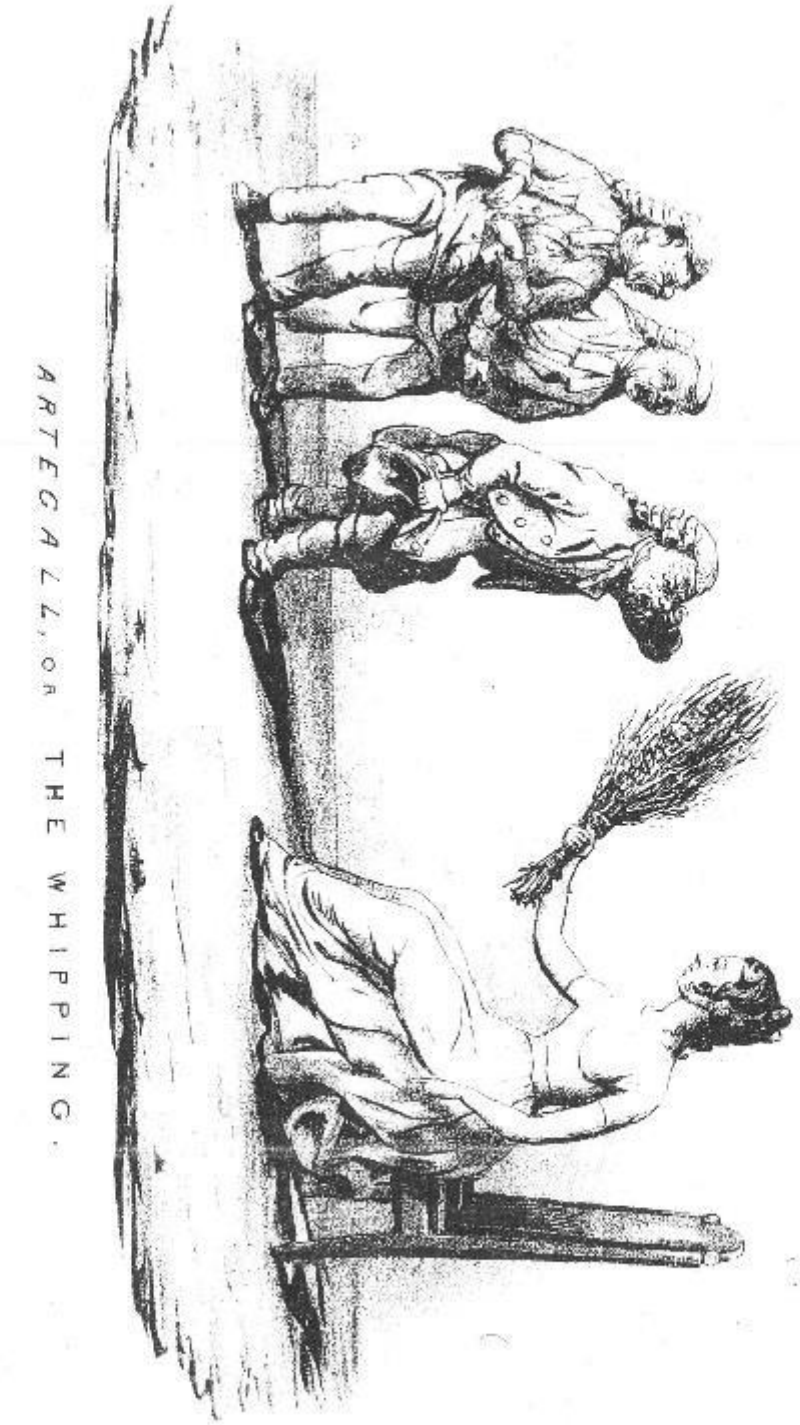

FIGURE 1

No. 9.

THE FLOGGING.

Down with your trousers, all three of you. I am sorry to have to lay this rod to your bare backs; but you are such naughty boys that I must. Its no use your roaring and bellowing, young gentlemen. (Oh! I'll not do so again.) Do so again! no you'll have no opportunity to do so again. Now loosen them buttons. You have not learnt your *grammar*—you are a disgrace to the English boys, although few of them do their country much credit. The Welsh boys know their grammar without their being taught; but *you* can't be taught. Shame upon you! You have been detected slandering, and lying too. (No, Ma'am, it was them there Parsons that told lies.) Hold your tongue, I tell you. You have taught those poor wretches you called your assistants, but who were more competent than yourselves, many discreditable things, in morals and manners; and you have made the whole country disgusted with your conduct. (Oh no! Mr. Griffith, and Mr.——.) Hold your tongue Master Symons—Down with them trousers—tuck up your shirt, Sir! (Ma, Ma'a, O dear, O dear!) If you'd forgive me this time, I'll learn *Welsh*, that I may know how to behave better.) You shall be whipped, and learn Welsh too, you wicked urchin.

The miserable trio were now flogged, it is said, *unmercifully*.

Y FFLANGELLIAD.

Ni fu erioed drueiniaid annedwydd a nwy o ffangellu arnynt nâ'r tri ysbiwyr, a anfonodd y gelynion *Whigaidd* i Gymru. Yn y darlun y mae cyfeiriad at ffangell a wnaed ac a gymwyswyd gan Fonеddiges wladgarol, yr hon ffangell a eilw "Artegall." Y mae darllenwyr Seisnig yn ddigon hysbys o'r driniaeth deilwng a roddwyd—a gall y Cymro uniaith gael rhyw amcan wrth edrych ar y *gwympedau* a wna'r dihirwyr yn wyneb y wialen.

'Dyw o ddim defnydd i chwi lefain a rorio—Datodwch eich closau. (O! Ma'am, ni wnawn ni byth eto.) Ni chewch chwi ddim cyfleusdra, Genawon! A wnewch chwi hel celwyddau eto, ys gwn i, dan y ffug o gasglu gwir hanes? A wnewch chwi waradwyddo ac enllibio y rhai sydd wedi gwneud yr unig leshad trwy ddysgu y bobl? a dweyd mai moddion drygioni yw y moddion a arferant i wneud dynion yn Gristionogion? Nid oes dim synwyr yn eich penau, na daioni yn eich calonau, y burgundiaid bryntion. Bydd ar y Saeson byth gywilydd o'ch plegid—a digon o achos. Y mae yn anhawdd i Gymry feddwl nad barbaiaid yw pawb tuhwnt i Hafren, wrth weled mor anfedrus a fuoch chwi yn y gorchwyl y'ch danfonwyd i'w gyflawni. (Ni fedrwn ni ddim Cymraeg, Ma'am.) Na fedwrch, ysywaeth, ddim Cymraeg, ac *am hyny* ni fedrwch ar synwyr i beidio eich gwneud eich hunain, a'r rhai a'ch danfonodd, yn wawd a dirmyg i Genedl gyfan. (Y Personiaid, Ma'm,——.) Daliwch eich tafodau, a wnewch chwi. Mi a'ch chwipiaf nes bydd y wialen yma yn bwrt yn fy llaw i. (Bà-a-à-a—!) Hust—tewch a'ch sŵn, y fynyd yma—I lawr a'r closau, ac i fyny a'r crysau. (O! Be nawn ni, be nawn ni!)

Dywedir fod y ffangelliad a gymerodd le yn un *garw iawn*, a bod y troseddwyr heblaw hyny wedi ei bwrw i alltudiaeth—dau i Loegr, neu Sir Faesyfed am eu hoes; ac un i lafur caled yn Llangollen i (ofer) *geisio dysgu Cymraeg!!!*

Cardiff: Printed by D. Evans, at the "Principality" Office.

FIGURE 2

JANE WILLIAMS (YSGAFELL) (1806-85)

FIGURE 3

ELIZABETH DAVIS/BETSY CADWALADYR (1789-1860)

FIGURE 4

GLOSSARY

The first five definitions are taken from the *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*; the sixth is taken from Meic Stephens (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Cofiant (pl. *cofiannau, cofiaint*) (I, p.532) Biography, memoir.

Eisteddfod (pl. *eisteddfodau*) (I, pp. 120-21) (modern sense) Event or festival at which competitions are held in music, elocution, literature, arts and crafts, etc., the prizes being awarded according to the decision of the adjudicators.

Englyn (pl. *englynion)* (I, p. 1182) An epigrammatic stanza in Welsh poetry (now always a quatrain) composed in the 'strict' metres according to certain specific rules.

Gwerin (II, p. 1643) People, populace, peasantry.

Hwyl (II, p. 1937) Fervour (especially religious), characteristic musical intonation, formerly much in vogue in the perorations or the Welsh pulpit.

Mabinogion (pp. 379, 467) The title used by Lady Charlotte Guest for her translations into English of twelve medieval Welsh tales; the first four of these tales had previously been known as *Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi* (lit. *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*).

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NLW MS 24051F (Poems and letters by Jane Williams, family history papers from her brother Henry David Williams)

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N. B. The parish of Old Radnor, which includes the village of Evenjobb (where Jane William's father and grandfather lived) forms part of the diocese of Hereford, and its parish registers are held in the Herefordshire County Record Office.

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